

CHUCK

PURDY




W. C. STODDARD

Ralph L. Stoddard
from his father.

Madison, New Jersey,
September = 1906.

William O. Stoddard



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NELLIE TAKES CHUCK TO TASK.

CHUCK PURDY

THE STORY OF A NEW YORK BOY

BY

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ILLUSTRATED

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE.
CHUCK, DICK AND BILLY . . .	7

CHAPTER II.

A VERY HOT SATURDAY . . .	19
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND . . .	29
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARRIVAL OF NAPOLEON . . .	40
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

CHUCK'S DISCOVERY	50
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

A CAPTIVITY AND A RESCUE . . .	66
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

CHUCK AND HIS MIND	79
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII.

CHUCK'S SATURDAY DOWN TOWN . .	101
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

NELLY PURDY'S SATURDAY . . .	119
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X.

CHUCK AND HEAPS OF RICHES . .	133
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

THE BUSINESS OF BOY-BUILDING . .	145
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

EVERY BOY'S BIG SECRET . . .	158
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRAWBERRY PARTY . . .	168
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

SATURDAY ON THE HARLEM . . .	184
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

HOW CHUCK ASTONISHED HIMSELF .	201
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

A CITY FOURTH OF JULY. . . .	210
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII

RIGHT INTO VACATION	227
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOING INTO A NEW WORLD	246
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

DISCOVERING THE COUNTRY	258
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XX.

EGGS AND BEES AND HORSES	272
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

SETTLED ON A FARM	294
---------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

A NEW BOY IN A NEW CITY	308
---------------------------------	-----

CHUCK PURDY.

CHAPTER I.

CHUCK, DICK AND BILLY.

THE sun looked in upon the city of New York very early, one June morning. He found it all quiet and very much as he had left it the previous evening, with the exception of one of its largest and most solemn looking goats.

That goat was evidently an old citizen. The amount of beard he wore added greatly to the natural dignity of his countenance. His horns were deeply wrinkled and were of such a length as to require two complete twists in coiling them up for easy carrying. They were so nearly alike that he had a well balanced head. His coat was shaggy, and although it was worn in some places it fitted him closely all over. Nevertheless, it had a look of being warm for summer wear.

The goat was all alone and wide awake, and he stood upon the top of a rock which lay asleep in

one of the uppermost wards of the city. A ledge of gray limestone lifted its back through the surface of a wide, empty space, and was so hard that all the streets which might otherwise have gone through broke short off against it. The rock the goat stood on was only a sort of bunion upon the middle of that ledge.

The great city had not been at all choked off by the conduct of the limestone ledge, but had grown around and beyond it. It had gone right along, taking in more and more land and houses and trees, putting down all the streets it had on hand and getting ready to make more, until it reached the seashore. There it had been compelled to stop, except that it saw some islands out in the water and reached out and captured them and built a lot of hospitals on them.

There was room on the top of that rock for at least nine goats and a kid, but the only one there now had no occasion for feeling lonely. There were more than a million and a quarter of people around him. Most of them, however, were away to the southward, beyond Harlem River, on Manhattan Island. Nearly all of them were as yet soundly asleep, with their bed-room windows wide open.

Right between the fore feet of the goat, lay the root end of a cabbage-stalk, and he picked it up again and again, to see if anything more could be

done for it. He came to a positive decision, at last. A goat in the prime and vigor of his mind and body would require a better breakfast than could be made of the last wreck of that cabbage.

He dropped it thoughtfully, and walked away to the end of the rocky ledge and looked down upon the street twenty feet below. Any man looking on would have said that the descent was almost perpendicular, with some breaks and cracks and roughnesses. How the goat did it was one of those foolish questions that are hard to answer, but he did do it. He went down the side of that ledge as composedly as if it had been a flight of stairs. When he reached the street he remarked, "Ba-a-ah-beh", in a rich, tenor voice; but there was no one to answer him and he marched away.

The golden glory of the summer morning was growing fast, but the wonder of it had very few observers. The goat went down one street and up another and had them all to himself, except that he met three milkmen and four other goats and quite a number of cats. One of the latter stood in front of a very small dog with her back and one paw lifted, but the dog ran and she got the back and the paw down again.

The next cat on the list was hungry and imprudent, and trouble came of it. A milkman had left a can of milk on the upper front step of a "high

stoop" house. It was a two-quart can, with a narrow top, and the cover had been forgotten. Only one quart of milk had been left in the can, but the cat could look down and wish for it. Even a long fore-paw could hardly scratch the surface of that temptation. The cat put her head in and strained a little and at the moment when she was doing her best and began to hope, her hind feet slipped on the stone step. Just after that the goat walked away with a look of inquiry which had been upon his face changed into one of satisfaction. He had seen a tin can, a cat and a quart of milk, all mixed up, somehow, come tumbling down the front steps of a very nice house. Even a city goat rarely sees anything more interesting than that before breakfast.

The next thing he really did see, worth noting, was a policeman, in a blue uniform with brass buttons and wearing a gray, felt helmet, slowly tramping his rounds and looking into all the little front yards and areas as he passed them. That was precisely what the goat was doing, in his own uniform and wearing a horn helmet, and the policeman said to him —

"You're up early, Billy. If there's any mischief to be found you're just the goat to find it."

Billy was therefore one of those characters that are "known to the police".

He made no reply whatever, but stepped along

a little more rapidly until he came out into a very wide street, running nearly north and south. It was as silent and deserted as the other streets, but it had many peculiarities. The buildings were of all sorts and patterns, but the greater part of them were of moderate size and made of wood. There were not many vacant lots and nearly every house gave up its lower story to some kind of business. Some of them had no upper stories at all. Signs and awnings and show windows, and empty carts at the curbstones, explained the true nature of Third Avenue, north of the Harlem River.

Billy knew all he cared to know without any telling. What he did not know was that if he had turned up that street, northerly, it would have led him for miles and miles through the new part of New York city; and that if he should keep on, it would become an old country road, taking him away up into the northern mountains, to find more rocks than he had ever seen. On the other hand, if he should turn and follow Third Avenue southerly, across the bridge over Harlem River, it would lead him through miles and miles of old New York city, down to a place where he could stand on the end of a wharf and look out upon salt water.

Billy knew the ward he lived in and had no intention of traveling out of it. He went right

along the avenue for a square or two and seemed to have reached his destination.

On the corner of a street which crossed the avenue at right angles, there stood a two-story frame building, painted white, with leather-colored trimmings. Owing to the work of time and weather, that means several kinds of leather. A wide platform in front of the house reached out to the edge of the stone sidewalk. There were two steps from that platform down to the sidewalk and over it was a wooden awning. From the edge of that awning to the posts at the curbstone, stretched another awning of canvas. Over the door was a sign that read "John Purdy", and there were a dozen other signs, smaller and larger, to tell what kind of a grocery John Purdy kept.

Billy must have understood that the grocery business had not begun for that day, for he turned the corner and walked to the rear end of the building. It was a most uninteresting place, where a high, brown, rickety board fence, full of holes, led on to a weather-beaten old barn.

Billy knew the holes in that fence. He at once looked through the largest of them without being compelled to stop and choose. There was something to be heard as well as to be seen, for at that moment a very serious voice remarked —

"A chicken can see just as much with one eye

as he can with two, only he's got to turn his head."

"Ba-a-a-be-eh," went through the hole in the fence.

"You there, Billy? I haven't got a thing for you."

There was a game-cock standing in the middle of that back yard and he had worn a somewhat drooping and battered expression until he heard the voice of the goat. He seemed to know it, for his head went up at once; his wings flared out for a vigorous flap and he answered Billy with a shrill and warlike chicken-bugle.

"I'm glad he didn't kick your crow out of you when he spoiled your eye. What did you do to him?"

Dick turned his remaining eye inquiringly up at the boy, but he had no tale to tell. There was nobody else who could tell of a battle he had won; or how, a little after sunrise, he had left just enough of strength in one of his neighbors to carry that beaten bird over the fence into the next yard. The hoarse and spiritless crow which now came over in reply to his own, told all that could be said about it.

"You're a one-eyed bird, Dick, sure's my name's Chuck Purdy. You'll never be the same rooster, Dick, not forever and ever."

That was a long time for anybody to think of.

Chuck drew a noiseless whistle, put both hands in his pockets and looked at his battered pet very solemnly, while Billy stared at them both through the hole in the fence. The game-cock had been a very handsome fellow, but Chuck Purdy never had been and probably never would be. He was not very tall, for a boy of almost fourteen, but he was uncommonly broad-shouldered and heavy-looking. There was nothing heavy or slow about any of his movements, however, and he seemed to be in vigorous health. His brown hair, upon which there was now no covering, was thick and bushy, with a tendency to curl which entirely concealed any parting. His wide, rosy face had a short, turn-up nose in the middle of it. His mouth was large and his twinkling gray eyes were set deeply, having just enough of an upward slant at their outward corners to justify the other boys in asserting that they were "put into him kind o' Chineese". He wore a loose, wrinkly coat and trousers, of strong gray cloth, and they seemed to exactly suit him without at all fitting him. The coat had an air of having never yet been buttoned up and it swung back in a way that showed not only a blue, checked shirt, but also the fact that Chuck wore no suspenders. That was one reason why his trousers came down a little slouchily over a pair of dusty-looking shoes. Taking him just as he stood, Chuck Purdy was the homeliest thing

in that back yard except an old mop that was leaning, tired out, against one corner of the hen-house.

"It's tough business keeping chickens in the city," he groaned, almost despondingly. "Oh, but wouldn't I like to live away out in the country, with lots of room, and just have hundreds of 'em, and some ducks, and some geese, and some turkeys, and a horse and cow — and pigs!"

"Ba-a-a-beh," came again through the hole in the fence, but Chuck paid no attention to it. His wide face was lengthening as if it were pulled down by what he was thinking about. Just then his dream of what life might be in the country was driven away from him.

"Come in to breakfast!" sang out a very sweet, clear voice behind him.

Chuck whirled around like a teetotum, and there was a sort of living "good morning" standing on the back step of the house. It was a remarkably bright, rosy, sunny-looking girl, who resembled Chuck without being at all like him.

The shadow vanished from Chuck's face as he looked into hers, but he said —

"Nelly, Dick's been having another fight. Old rascal! Look at him!"

"One of his eyes is out. Oh, dear!" exclaimed Nelly.

"Clean out," said Chuck; "and he's all pecked up. Don't I wish we lived in the country!"

"That's what you're always wishing. Come along in to breakfast. It's 'most time to open store."

"There goes my Saturday. I'd as lief be in school. Well—that is—I'd a' most as lief."

"Never mind, Chuck, it's only for one day. Vacation's coming."

"So's examination—whew-ew!"

He was following Nelly into the house, and the whistle brought him an answer. A fat and short-of-breath voice on the further side of the breakfast table suddenly asked him—

"Chuck—about examination—is there any hope in the world—of your being—promoted?"

"Guess there isn't, mother. I don't know near as much as I did when term began. It's awful, and Dick's got his left eye knocked out."

"I don't care about Dick. You'll never get through school at all—at this rate. Eat your breakfast. Your father's had his. You'll have plenty to do to-day."

Chuck swung along into a chair at the breakfast table. He did not groan, but he eyed his plate with a sort of tired-out look. He was a boy upon whom the trials of life were beginning to come, and he would much rather have had his Saturday in particular without any.

The meaning of his mother's remark was this: that no scholar in a New York city public

school can pass from a lower grade into a higher until he has overcome the difficulties of the lower. His record and the result of his examination must entitle him to promotion or he does not get it. Chuck's record had been sadly defective and his examinations had proved very high fences for him. He had been "left back" more than once, in spite of his uniformly high marks for good conduct. In fact, he was the dullest kind of boy, and everybody else knew it and expected it of him. That is, everybody who knew him knew that he had no head to speak of, and many kindly people had told him so, in one way or another. He had even got into the habit of telling himself so, and when he turned his head on one side a little, to look hard and sidewise at anything that puzzled him, he did not expect to see as much in it as might appear to the eyes of other people. Bright and knowing boys and girls were by nature entitled to get ahead of him. Sometimes he found himself getting half-way jealous of them, but it was only half-way, for he was a right down good-hearted fellow. He knew every boy and dog in the whole twenty-third ward. It was a very large ward and great areas of it were as yet open commons. Other huge patches were covered with trees or were fenced in for cultivation or for villa-grounds. There were queer and wild and interesting places along the Harlem River and

out among the islands and along the shore, all the way out toward Long Island Sound.

Chuck Purdy was nearly at the lower end of his class in geography, but for all that he knew a great deal about the particular piece of his own country that he lived in. He had been born right there, in that house on the Third Avenue corner, when all around it was a mere village, named Mott Haven. That was before the city of New York reached across the Harlem River and took in that and a dozen other villages. Chuck remembered the names of them all and knew more about them than he did about the city.

"It kind o' swallowed us," he said, but he knew that all the swallowed part was growing more and more like the other and older part, over on Manhattan Island. He remarked of it—

"The further you go, below the Bridge, the more it's city. It's enough to tire a fellow out, just to think of all there is down there."

CHAPTER II.

A VERY HOT SATURDAY.

THE moment that Chuck went into the house, the goat took his face away from the hole in the fence. Dick began to call his hens and to pick somewhat languidly at the breakfast scattered upon the ground for him. Out in the front of the house, the wooden shutters had come down. So had the shutters of a great many other places, up and down the street. Mr. Purdy himself and a tall, slim young man, were covering the platform with baskets and trays of vegetables. The entire face of the establishment took on a wide-awake and a well-provisioned look. There was no wonder that a hungry goat, even without any money in his pockets, should come to take an admiring survey of such an eatable exposition. If, however, Billy had had any wicked thought of taking something more than a survey, he did not do so, for he could read one of the signs very well. It was a sign the slim young man made at him

with a stick, and Billy at once trotted across the avenue.

The upper part of Mr. Purdy's building was used for family purposes, but all of the lower story was given to business, with the exception of the small back room in which they were eating breakfast. No sooner was the front platform covered than the slim young man, with Mr. Purdy's assistance, began to fill one basket after another with parcels and all sorts of eatables. There was a great deal of reading of written lists, and both of the voices were loud enough to be heard in the breakfast-room.

"I can eat a good deal," said Chuck, confidently, "before they'll be ready. Wish the old horse hadn't died till the new one got here."

"You can play horse for one day, I guess," began Nelly.

"Had to be horse till nine o'clock last evening," interrupted Chuck; "and it isn't any kind of fun. Wish I'd seen Dick have that fight."

"Chuck," asked Nelly, "will Fin Harris be at the head of your class again this time?"

"Shouldn't wonder. There's three or four of 'em pretty close together. Wish I could learn as easy as he does, or you."

"I guess he studies," said his mother, with a very deep breath, and her son replied —

"Perhaps he does, and he is a real good fellow, but he fooled too long with Billy, after school yesterday. Billy butted him down and stood over him."

"What did Fin do?" asked Nelly.

"Do? Why, he couldn't do a thing. I had to take Billy by the horns and lead him away before Fin could get up."

"Chuck!" shouted his father at that moment. "Come along. All ready."

There was very little more that could have been done for that breakfast and there was no excuse for lingering. On the sidewalk in front of the grocery stood a four-wheeled hand-cart, of a very neat pattern. In this the slim young man was stowing away parcels and baskets, and each of these was labelled with written directions as to where it should go. Billy the goat was rudely expelled from before five houses, across the street, while he was persistently watching the stowage of that hand-cart.

"Now, Chuck," remarked Mr. Purdy, "the further you go, the lighter it'll be. The new horse'll be here to-morrow."

"Seems to me he might have been got here before," said Chuck, with a doleful stare at the hand-cart.

"Well," said his father, "I did know that the old fellow was bound to wink out, pretty soon, but

he went off quicker'n I reckoned on. The new horse is a buster."

"So's this 'ere cart-load," grumbled Chuck, as he tugged it away. It was at once evident that there was no lack of strength in his broad, vigorous, ungraceful young body. Not many fellows of his age could have handled such a task so easily. That it came to him at all was to be charged to the account of a common disaster. All horses must die and Mr. Purdy's horse had obeyed the common law. After traveling his due number and length of streets and avenues, he had found his last house and had suddenly stopped in front of it and lain down.

"I want to see that new one," said Chuck, as he trundled his cart along. "Wonder if he'll run away with the wagon. If he doesn't know any tricks I'll teach him some."

People generally do not pay much attention to a grocer's boy and a hand-cart, and the human beings of all sorts who were now hurrying along to their day's work or coming out of their houses saw nothing interesting in Chuck and his load. For all that, however, he had been watched and followed with deep and intelligent interest, and he knew nothing about it. He had several house-bells to ring and parcels to leave before he took out either of the baskets, and then he turned out of the avenue and into a very neat-looking side-

street. It seemed as if the people who lived there must be all at breakfast yet, or else getting ready for it. Chuck stopped in front of a very silent-looking brick house, on the shady side, and went through the gate. The door he pulled the bell of was at the bottom of one flight of steps and under another and for a moment the hand-cart was hidden from its manager. It was not hidden from its silent watcher, however, and a goat can cross a street in a remarkably short time. One of the basement windows of the house was opened a little and a shrill voice said —

“Leave the basket right there. I’ll come for it. Hope you didn’t forget the greens.”

“There they are on top, ma’am,” said Chuck, as he turned away, and it was well he had not been detained any longer. When he reached the sidewalk Billy was out in the middle of the street, but he was reasonably happy.

“Got one of the parsnips, did he?” exclaimed Chuck. “Glad he didn’t carry off the whole bunch. I must look out for him.”

There was not the slightest need, for Billy did not propose to follow any further. He may or may not have known beforehand that that gate opened with a push, but as soon as he deemed prudent he gave it one and then there was a goat in the area of that house. Then, very quickly, there was a horned sneak-thief marching away

down the street with a very fine bunch of greens in his mouth, and it was no fault of Chuck's whatever.

The hand-cart grew lighter very rapidly, but time was consumed upon errand after errand, until now the great city was fairly awake and about its business. People who were hardened to the signs of that daily awakening hardly noticed them, but they were well worth taking some note of.

When Billy the goat first mounted the rock that morning, with his cabbage stalk, he had had but just light enough to look out upon a great silence. The stalk had disappeared, inch by inch, as the light grew, and only ears as keen as his could have detected the faint, low hum, which began and which increased every minute, as he worked his way from the rock to Purdy's Corner. The southerly breeze that came up from over Manhattan Island brought more and more of that hum, as the people, by the hundred thousand, awoke and began to stir about and make little domestic disturbances of the long stillness. Now, however, it was about seven o'clock and there came a great and sudden change. At that moment every steam whistle in every factory and machine shop in that vast area sent out a shrill announcement that the hour for work had come. Then the engines went into operation. Belts

were thrown over driving-wheels and all that was connected with them began to move. Trip hammers went up and down, saws buzzed, carts rattled over stony pavements, men walked and shouted and pounded, and the volume of sound was fed, as a great river or a sea is, by an innumerable multitude of little streams. The curious part of it all is, that the men and women who live in that great sea of sound never hear it. Sometimes when a man wakes up at night he hears the little that is left of it; or when he gets up early and goes out into the street it comes to him at seven o'clock, because of the sudden increase and because there is sure to be a steam whistle somewhere near him.

Chuck heard whistles, a dozen of them, and after that he heard a great many other things, before his hand-cart was empty. He was on his way homeward, at last, when he suddenly uttered an exclamation and stood stock still. Nobody had spoken to him, but he had seen something. Only a short distance ahead of him and on the street he was following, a man held up a little red flag.

"Blasting!" said Chuck, and in another half minute a dull, heavy, explosive sound added its detonation to the other voices of the great city. The hand-cart rattled forward instantly and its boy pony paused at the edge of a deep excavation.

"Must be for a whole row," said Chuck. "More'n half of it is solid rock and they're making the cellars good and deep. I didn't know they'd begun on it."

It was odd that he knew anything at all about it, but a few more comments that he made let out something. He was habitually noting the growth of that ward a great deal as if it belonged to him. He had formed a habit of watching for new buildings and knew when their foundations were laid. He picked up the names of owners and learned somehow or other what the structures were intended for. A boy's mind must busy itself upon something or other and so he wound up with —

"They must have had those holes drilled when they quit work yesterday or they couldn't have got down a blast so early this morning."

Chuck was a dull boy, but he had a head on his shoulders and very good eyes for some things, after all. He went home in possession of several interesting scraps of new information. He reached the grocery and was just going in when he was addressed by a thin voice that was trying to be very stern and solemn.

"Chuck," said the voice, "did you deliver Mrs. Atley's greens with her basket?"

"Yes, I did, Mr. Gorrik," said Chuck.

"No, you didn't," said Mr. Gorrik, with a

greater amount of sternness. "Here is Mr. Atley, and no greens were in the basket."

"They were all there when I left it in the area," said Chuck, positively.

"Impossible!" exclaimed a very large, red-faced man, who towered behind Mr. Gorrik, in the door-way.

"Impossible!" solemnly added Mr. Gorrik. "Mrs. Atley says they were not there."

"I didn't say they were," said Chuck. "All I said was that I left 'em there. There was one goat on that block and two more on the block above, and there's no telling what a goat won't do with greens."

"Goats!" exclaimed the large man. "I saw 'em. That accounts for it. Nuisances!"

"Take another bunch of greens," remarked Mr. Purdy, from behind his counter. "Chuck, there are more baskets ready. You'll have to put in all your time to-day."

"Glad Billy got a breakfast," growled Chuck. "She'd no business to leave 'em out there. I'd have gone for 'em if I'd been him. My Saturday's knocked into a cocked hat."

It looked so by the time the hand-cart was loaded again, and there was very little comfort in Mr. Gorrik's remark, as he leaned slenderly over it — "Well for you there isn't anything heavy — no barrels."

“Box of soap,” said Chuck. “And a bag of flour. Heaviest kind of pulling and it’s getting hot.”

All the cooler part of the day was indeed gone, and the task before him took on more and more of a nature that kept him thinking of the new horse that was to come.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND.

THERE were a great many uncomfortable people in the city of New York that warm June morning. There were fat people who strongly declared their longing for cooler weather. There were poverty-stricken people, by the thousand. There were only too many who were sick and suffering, and then there were all the wicked people.

Besides all these there was one poor fellow who knew almost nothing whatever of the wonderful place he waked up in. He was a lost dog, and he awoke under an empty wagon in a corner of a vacant lot. For the first time in his life he found himself without any master. That important part of his possessions had gone away from him and had already reached the farm-house home where they both belonged. That was twenty miles away, up country, and there the dog's lost owner waked up to mourn the loss of his dog and to

make guesses as to what had become of him. All that mourning and guessing was of no use to the dog. He was a quadruped to be sincerely regretted by any right-minded man.

In fact, his activity, his intelligence and his inquiring turn of mind had been the causes of his disaster. He was a large and nearly thoroughbred bull-dog, black, fat, and in the middle of his third year. It was his first visit to the great city and the sights had excited him. While his master was busy with the sale of a wagon-load of "old crop" potatoes, at high prices, the four-footed young fellow from the country had busied himself with a general exploration of everything he saw. He worked inquisitively all the while, but it was a cat that at last ruined him. He had never before seen so large a cat, and he chased her up one street and down another till she came to a telegraph pole. A streak of cat flashed up the side of that telegraph pole to the cross-piece that held the wires up and she was safe. She could look down in scorn and tail-swelling and spitting upon a disappointed bull-dog at the bottom of the pole. After he had satisfied himself that city cats do not come down from telegraph poles for a long while, her enemy from the country gave her up, and now he had a hard time before him. He had miles and miles of hot and thirsty trotting, through unknown streets and ave-

nues, vainly looking around for a wagon which had given him up and gone home. Night came, at last, and there was no use in his hunting any farther. So he gave it up and went to sleep in the vacant lot, a disheartened and homeless dog. He awoke, when morning came, with a very homeless feeling. He also felt that he had not eaten anything to speak of since breakfast-time of the day before. He was a bull-dog of the right sort, however, and there was no give-up in him. He even had enough enterprise left to chase a cat, for a short distance. He gave her up quickly and wandered on. He met a goat that made him think of an old ram, a neighbor and friend of his at home, but he saw nothing else which reminded him of farm-life and happiness.

Hour after hour went by, and the streets grew hotter and dustier, and the prospect of finding a master seemed farther and farther from him. He was passing the wide door of a livery stable when his next disaster came to him. He had spoken to a large number of dogs, already, but all had been of breeds and sizes that inclined them to treat him hospitably after inquiring his name and discovering his fighting weight. Now, however, there suddenly dashed out of the stable door a dog very nearly like himself but a trifle larger. That dog had a home and a master and had eaten a breakfast and was not tired out. He should

have been kind to a stranger, but he was not, and in half a minute there were three stable-men trying hard to separate those dogs. Both had gripped hard and both held on for desperate earnest.

One stable man took his own dog by the hind legs, and one took the stranger in like manner, and both pulled while the third stable man worked hard with a heavy whip. Not one of his blows fell upon the dog he knew. He used his boots also; but the fighting grip was unbroken. Now a fourth stable man, wiser than the others, came out with a pail of water and began to pour it over the noses of those dogs. When a dog's nose is full of water he must open his mouth to breathe, and that pair had to let go or strangle. It was a cough and a snort and then the stable dog's master carried him in by the hind legs to tie him up. The large, red-headed, freckle-faced man who had hold of the stranger's legs changed one of his hands to the loose skin back of his ears, and looked as if he meant to apply severe discipline.

The world seemed very dark to the young fellow from the country, but he rolled his eyes toward the stable-door without yelping. He felt that all things were against him, but would still have gone after that other dog, anywhere.

The large, bony, unreasonable man tightened his grip and said something savagely loud, but

just then the lost bull-dog heard behind him a voice that was full of strong indignation — “I say now! Hullo! Don’t you hurt that dog. He’s no more to blame than your dog is. Come here, Bob!”

“Oh, it’s your dog, is it? Take him away then. He’s a good one. I’d never hurt any dog, but I didn’t know if I was safe to let go of him.”

The country name of the lost dog may have been Robert, or some other, but he was not a fool at all. He was able to comprehend a very stout boy, stooping to pat him and say, “Poor fellow — poor fellow” — and he licked that boy’s hand without hesitation.

“Take him away,” said a voice from the stable. “He’s a good one, he is, but I don’t want my dog torn up with fighting him. Give you ten dollars for that one?”

“No, you don’t. Come along, Bob!”

“He’s not hurt much.”

“Don’t know whether he is or not. He was one against five.”

The bony man answered with a great, rattling chuckle, and Chuck Purdy took up the handles of his cart. The lost dog did not even wait to be whistled for. He trotted right along at once, with his wet head under the end of that hand-cart. Errands were over and it was not long before a halt was made in front of the grocery.

"Hullo, Chuck!" exclaimed Mr. Purdy, in the doorway. "Where did you get that dog?"

"Guess somebody's lost him," said Chuck.

The stranger stood still and panted while he was talked about, until Mr. Purdy said —

"All right. Take him into the back yard. He's yours till somebody comes for him. He's the right kind, anyhow."

"Guess he is," said Chuck. "You just ought to have seen how he held on."

"That's the sort. You don't find 'em every day. Dogs or men either. Take him in and feed him."

"Come, Bob. Come — whew-ew!"

Chuck was a good whistler.

Bob, the bull-dog, was lame and he was bruised. His heart was lonely, his head was sore and famine assailed him internally. He followed his young friend through the grocery, and it seemed to him as if the back door opened upon a promise of better things to come. Barn, chickens, tubs, a cat, fences, a lot of straw, adorned the prospect. Then he turned his back upon everything but the plate of bones and scraps brought out to him by Chuck. The badly mixed sorrows of his morning had ended in a place of peace and plenty. He had a home and a master, and he ate and he drank, and he lay down upon the heap of straw as if he belonged there.

Chuck came out to look at him several times and was promptly recognized by Bob, even to the extent of a friendly bark on one occasion. Mr. Purdy also came, and so did Mr. Gorrik and Nell and even Mrs. Purdy. There was a curious uniformity in the opinions expressed of the stranger's race and personal character.

The entire household united in denouncing dog-fights, but there seemed to be a strong conviction that Bob could not have been to blame. Besides, everybody was pleased with him for holding on so well. He was a pretty sick dog in body but grew less and less so in mind, and he responded cheerfully to all advances made by his new acquaintances. He wagged his tail with especial politeness to Dick and an old hen when they came to stare at him. They had but three eyes to do it with, but Dick understood a bull-dog sufficiently well with the side of his head that could see.

Chuck Purdy did not go out again as a horse until after he had eaten his dinner, but that did not make his rest a long one. It was not a perfect sit-down, either, for Saturday is a busy day for grocers and there were many customers. Then came several errands with a basket only and no hand-cart, and Chuck declared that if this sort of thing were to go on it would make a thin boy of him.

It was perspiring work in such a hot sun. and

he thought more and more longingly about the new horse. It was some comfort that Mr. Gorrik himself had to take out a number of parcels, for business grew better as the day went on. Mrs. Purdy and Nell had to come out at times and help attend to customers during the absences of the slender young man.

Bob remained in the back yard, and he was quite contented to lie still. He was a tough fellow, but he had been through a trying campaign and he felt the effects of it. As Mr. Purdy said, however, nothing was now the matter with him but "stiffness", and that would speedily wear away.

It was about the middle of the afternoon, and Chuck and Mr. Gorrik left the grocery at the same time and Nelly and her mother stood looking after them.

"Mother," said Nell, "Chuck'll break down in all his lessons, next Monday. He can't study to-morrow and he's only been over 'em once."

"My dear," replied her mother, very thoughtfully, "he won't have time for any more studying to-day. He's got to go out again this evening. It's all the fault of that there horse."

She did not say whether she meant the horse that died at the wrong time and place, or the other horse that had not arrived, but Chuck and his hand-cart had evening work, all the same.

All day long he had met boy after boy whom he

knew, and each had had something to say about baseball or some other kind of fun, but it did seem as if all the boys in that ward had broken loose, just after supper. Not one of them had any work on his hands except Chuck Purdy. At least a dozen asked him, in one form of words or another —

“Don’t you wish you could come along with us fellows?” And all of Chuck’s mind and body had kept his tongue company in answering —

“Don’t I, though!” But he had comforted himself a little by adding —

“They’ve got to be in by eight o’clock, most of ’em, or they’ll catch it.”

It was a moonlit evening and the gas in all the street lamps and shop fronts was helping the moon, but on the side streets, through which some of Chuck’s weary errands took him, there were great reaches of deep and very quiet shadow. It was warm, but not so oppressive as it had been in the day time, and it told well for the toughness of his muscles that he was able to stand it through. It was nine o’clock when he came home from his last trip and brought his empty hand-cart in front of the side gate of the back yard. He put his hand upon the latch and it was as if he had touched off something. A fierce explosive growl came from the inside of that yard. Another rattle of the latch let off a more terrific explosion.

Bob could not consider himself thoroughly settled in his new home duties, but he had ideas about that gate. He had watched by it, ever since dark, and he was glad all over because a chance had come to bark through it.

"Bob? Hullo, Bob!"

That was the very voice he had heard when the bony man had him by the neck. It had named him Bob and it had led him to a home and a supper. In an instant more Chuck Purdy was made to understand that the deep-voiced keeper of that gate was all one wriggle and whine and bark of good-will toward him and of delight at his coming.

"Tell you what," said he to himself, "everything'll be safer'n it was. It wouldn't be healthy for any sneak-thief to try this place."

So he said to his father, a little later, and was somewhat dampened by the reply—

"First-rate, so long as it lasts, but his owner'll come for him some day. Nobody's going to give up a dog like that. I'd hunt for him the city over, if he was mine and I'd lost him."

"So would I," said Chuck, with a sudden mental view of himself hunting everywhere after Bob. When it got past him he felt easier, for it seemed one of the impossible things for any man to find a lost dog in the city of New York.

"They may advertise for him," said his father; "but I guess that wouldn't be of much use."

If Bob was advertised for, the advertisement never reached Mr. Purdy's grocery, and Chuck felt sure from the first that it would not. The family went to bed that night with a new and peculiar addition to their feeling of security. Five times before Chuck got to sleep he was delighted with the sound of a growl in the back yard. It was a grand thing to be the owner of so good a dog as that, and his faith grew very strong that Bob would stay.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARRIVAL OF NAPOLEON.

WHEN Sunday morning came, Chuck Purdy was out of bed as early as usual, in spite of Saturday's hard work. He had a sort of stiff and tired feeling until after he had washed his face, but the water seemed to cure him. Even before that he discovered that somebody else had risen earlier and was already looking through the best hole to be found in the back-yard fence.

"Ba-a-a-beh?" came inquiringly through the hole and up into the open window of Chuck's room.

"Hullo!" he said; "there's Billy."

"Woof-oof! Woof!" followed, in yet another language, and it seemed to come from just under the head of the goat.

Chuck was at the window now, remarking—

"There's Bob. Look at him! He's all right this morning, though. He can't get at him. Besides, Billy isn't much afraid of a dog any

time. Glad I've got some truck ready for the old rascal."

In a very few moments more, he was throwing some spoiled vegetables over the fence to Billy, and he did not know how perfectly Bob understood "stock feeding". He was a farmer himself, and had been brought up among horned animals. From that time forward a city goat asking for his breakfast would be no puzzle to him, and it made him feel more at home than ever. His own breakfast was even more liberal and promptly given than he was accustomed to expect, and he began to feel almost reconciled to city life. Every hen under Dick's protection had already made his acquaintance, and he had discovered, on Saturday evening, which one of quite a large number of cats belonged to that house and was not to be molested. That particular cat already understood the matter and walked lazily past him, Sunday morning, without so much as spitting at him. All her neighbors and friends, however, had taken full notice that Purdy's back yard was no longer a pleasant lounging place. The yard was a loss to them, but it was a great gain to Bob.

Chuck came down-stairs and went to the stable and opened the door and Bob at once rushed in ahead of him. Something was the matter with the padlock, and before it was properly hung up there came a sound of great scurrying around

inside of the stable, and then a squeal was nipped in two very suddenly.

“Rats! He’s caught one!” exclaimed Chuck. “If he’s a good ratter, now. Bob, did you get him?”

Very proud and stately was the response of the dog from the country, but it was silent. As Chuck hurried in, Bob met him. His tail was moving slowly to and fro and his head was up, but he did not speak. His mouth was so full of a great rat that only a low growl could crowd by and get out. He put his prize down at the feet of his new master, and then he went back for another and another.

“Three!” shouted Chuck. “Hurrah!”

The empty stall had proved a sort of rat-pit, and one nip of Bob’s jaws was as good as a dozen. He had obtained a large part of his education in barns and stables and knew exactly what part of the care of them belonged to him.

It was Summer time, now, and any farm-bred dog could take it for granted that the horses and cattle were out at work or were off at pasture, somewhere, at that season. Their absence, therefore, did not perplex him after he had looked around for them, and he vigorously continued his search for rats.

“Bob,” said Chuck, “you’ve done all the work you ought to do on Sunday morning. I’ll leave

the stable door open for you, though, while I go in to breakfast. Guess there won't be anything stolen."

That was a kind of insurance which Bob had plainly undertaken. All day long he varied his patrols of the back yard with occasional inspections of the stable, and particularly of the stall in which he had captured his rats. Chuck had something to tell about him, now, at the breakfast table, and he ended it with — "I wish I knew what his old name was. He had another, but he turns his head quick when he hears me say 'Bob'. He knows that it means him."

"Don't you take him out into the street," said Mr. Purdy, "till he's better accustomed to you. He'll get away as sure as you do."

Chuck looked sidewise toward the back yard as he soberly responded —

"Guess I won't. It's Sunday, anyhow. I wouldn't care to have him streaking after me into church."

The Purdys were church-going people, and it seemed to worry Mrs. Purdy a little that the new horse was to be brought home that Sunday evening. She said as much, but Nelly responded —

"Why, mother, doesn't he belong here? Hasn't he got to go to a stable? Is it wrong for a horse to come to his own stable on Sunday?"

"That's a fact," said her mother. "I didn't

think of that. And besides, a horse has got to eat. He wasn't bought to-day, he was paid for yesterday all except fifteen dollars, and he's our own horse."

That settled the matter and Chuck had special reasons for being glad that the new horse was to be on hand in time for Monday's work. He had been in the grocery, looking at the pile of heavy goods sold on Saturday evening.

"No hand-cart for them," he said. "I'm not horse enough for all that business. They say he's a good one. I'll be around when he gets here, sure's you live. I never wanted to see anybody so much as I want to see that horse."

He had to wait till after supper, and it was very nearly sunset of that quiet Sunday when the new purchase arrived. Chuck was in the back yard getting better acquainted with Bob, and neither of them knew that a large goat stood on the opposite side of the cross street, with a wisp of straw in his mouth, wondering why the grocery was shut up and that no possible chance appeared to pick up anything nice.

Goats have no correct ideas of Sunday, and a great many people are like them in that particular.

Chuck was startled by a sound of voices in front of the outer door of the stable, and then somebody began fumbling at its lock.

That was Mr. Purdy himself, but Bob sprang in all the same, and began to bark ferociously.

"Chuck," exclaimed his father, "look out for him. He doesn't know me very well."

There was an error in that, for Bob knew every member of the family already, and, the moment the door opened, his manner and tone of voice explained that he had only done his duty.

There stood Mr. Purdy and two other men, and behind them was a stoutly-made, brown horse, of medium size, led by a long halter.

"Lead him right in, Mr. Brown."

"No, Mr. Purdy, I'll deliver him here. You'll find him just the horse for you. Sound and kind. No vices. Well broken."

"That's all right, Mr. Brown," said Mr. Purdy. "Have you any name for him?"

"Well," said Mr. Brown, "my boys named him Napoleon — Nap is what he answers to. I'll go, now. Good evening, Mr. Purdy."

"Good evening, Mr. Brown. Good evening, Mr. Shelby," said the grocer, and off went the two men. They had been joint owners of the brown horse, and the man who had bought him did not hear them say, after getting around the corner —

"He'll have some fun now?"

"Oh, they'll get him in, somehow."

"They may; but if they do, how on earth'll they ever get him out?"

"Can't say about that."

If all that had been overheard, it would have been perfectly understood in a few minutes. There was time enough for anybody to walk away, for Mrs. Purdy and Nelly and Mr. Gorrik came out to examine and admire Napoleon. Chuck counted nine of the nearer neighbors doing the same thing before the family had half expressed their opinions. Bob smelt of every one that came as if he were searching for a possible horse-thief, and failed to find one. The general expression was strongly in favor of the new horse, and Billy the goat came half way across the street for a study of the matter, but was raced away.

"I'll lead him in," remarked Mr. Gorrik, at last, somewhat dignifiedly, and he turned toward the open door of the stable with the end of the halter in his hand. Napoleon did not move when Mr. Gorrik did. Not even when the halter began to pull upon him. The slim young man braced himself and pulled harder, and Napoleon stood perfectly still, without bracing.

"Chuck," said Mr. Purdy, with some redness in his face, "bring out the heavy whip. I'll see what this means."

The new horse evidently knew what a whip meant already, for he stepped around in all directions when he saw it. He learned more about it in a minute or so and was brought in zigzags

pretty close to the door of the stable, but beyond that he would not budge.

"Father," suddenly exclaimed Chuck, "he's afraid of the door. I know how to do it. I read it in a newspaper."

Off came his coat as he was speaking and he chuckled loudly as he threw it over the head of the new horse.

"Turn him round, Mr. Gorrik. Turn him round and back him in. He'll be all right soon as he's inside."

"I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Purdy. "It works like a charm. Who'd have thought of Chuck seeing through it."

"I should never have thought of it myself," said Mr. Gorrik, solemnly.

The new horse had not thought of anything but that doorway, and when Chuck took away the coat from his eyes, the poor, frightened animal saw nothing terrible before him. Only a stall and a manger and plenty of oats and hay. He gave a low whinny and walked right in.

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Purdy. "Guess he's all right. Brown said he was. He seems to be good enough horse. It isn't any trick, after all."

Chuck's work was not done yet, however. Before he was willing to leave the stable, he had given the new arrival a wonderfully complete grooming. Not only was Napoleon curried and

brushed all over, he also had eaten three apples and a handful of brown sugar, and had fully mastered the idea that one heavy-looking and very queer sort of boy had a strong good-will for him.

Chuck, on his part had more than one reason for being better contented in the stable than in the house. Nap was one reason and Bob was another, and a very large third reason came to him, just as he feared it would, when he at last went in. It was not yet bed-time, but Chuck thought it was a very warm and tiresome evening before he had heard all that was to be said, and that was very faithfully talked out, concerning his standing in school. The settled opinion seemed to be that his chances were good for being "left back" at the examinations.

"I haven't missed a day, mother," he said; "and I'm never late, and if it wasn't for the lessons" —

"That's it," said Nelly. "That's the very thing. You're away down. Why can't you recite like Fin Harris?"

The outer corners of Chuck's eyes went up in a more Chinese manner than common and his lips puckered into a round "O". When they came open he said, in a slow, perplexed sort of way — "I wish I could, but it's no use. I can't do it. Even when Fin tells me a thing, in the class, I can't get it out right. Fin can recite — he can."

"That's what I mean," said Mrs. Purdy, with a deep sigh. "You study hard enough, seems to me. I don't believe you need to be so dull. You haven't any memory whatever."

More was said, and Chuck believed every word of it. He was sincerely sorry, nevertheless, and made up his mind to do some hard and useless studying the next morning. That is, it seemed to him as if any sort of studying must be useless, for a dull boy who had no memory. Somehow, it never occurred to him or to anybody else to ask how it was that he remembered so well almost everything in that ward. He knew all the houses, cellars, vacant lots, people, dogs, and even a majority of the well settled cats. Perhaps it was because all that kind of remembering can be done without having any memory, while school lessons call for a good one.

CHAPTER V.

CHUCK'S DISCOVERY.

MONDAY morning came in at Chuck Purdy's bed-room window after a very curious fashion. It waked him up and pulled him out of bed and put him in mind of his lessons. Then it led him to the window and showed him the back yard and the stable.

"All right," he said, as if replying to somebody; "but there isn't any hand-cart work for me to-day. Only school."

He stood stock still for a whole minute, holding both stockings in one hand and making wry faces. The stockings dropped on the floor and he stooped and picked them up and put them on. He did it very slowly and made faces at them all the while as they came over his feet. It was just so with his trowsers and coat and shoes, and at last he remarked aloud —

"All those lessons have got to be studied,

sure's you live, but I'll go down and see to all of the rest of 'em first."

So he did, and the cat met him on the stairs with an evident effort to say "good-morning" to him. Dick crowed the moment he saw Chuck coming through the back doorway. Bob sprang toward him with a loud bark. Napoleon turned his head from his manger to whinny and Chuck knew it was meant for him and answered it with—

"Hullo, Nap! I'm coming."

It was not easy to get away from all his friends, for when he came out of the stable there was a queerer face than his own at the large hole in the fence, and an anxious voice inquired of him—

"Ba-a-a? Beh-eh?"

"Nothing for you this morning Billy. I've got to go up-stairs and study," replied Chuck.

That was true, but in spite of all his resolutions the back yard and the stable used up nearly all the time there was before the very early breakfast demanded by the grocery business. Chuck had to hear a great deal before he pushed his chair from the table. His father said a little and his mother said more and Nellie said as much as both of them, and Chuck himself had almost nothing to say, but he ate as much as usual. It was an awful thing to be a dull boy and to have so many people know it and to have a school examination right

ahead of him. He did not hurry in going up stairs, and when he got into his own room he stood for a full minute, looking sidewise at the little pile of books on the table.

"There isn't mor'n time to go over 'em once," he said; "and that won't do any kind of good. I shan't know any more about 'em."

Nevertheless, he sat down and took up his slate and an arithmetic and there was not even time for him to remember that he had forgotten every rule laid down in that book. He had read them all a hundred times apiece, but whenever he tried to repeat one of them it got away from him. This time he did not try to repeat anything, but dashed into the examples. He was an uncommonly dull boy or he would have noticed that they all came out correctly.

The other lessons were taken up, one by one, in a sort of desperation, but in no kind of hurry. Slowly and almost painfully, every word was dwelt upon, because there would be no time to come back to it. Then the last book was shut up and Chuck said to himself—"If I'd only had time to study them! But I didn't, and there wouldn't have been much use if I had."

He meant that with time enough he would have gone over and over all those lessons until he had hammered all the freshness out of them. All the words and things he had so slowly and carefully

pinned in his memory would have been driven away and he would have called that "study". As it was, he was compelled to strap up his books and get away to school. He felt very heavy about it, and when he met Fin Harris and thought of his manner of reciting, there came to him suddenly a kindly feeling for Billy the goat.

"Billy was too much for him, anyhow. But there's no arithmetic in Billy."

That was true, and yet Billy had a very good head of his own and succeeded in earning a fair living in what were called "hard times".

Chuck smothered his jealousy of Fin and went on into the immense brick "Grammar School" house where he was accustomed to show off his dullness. He knew that nobody expected anything of him and he did not expect anything of himself, but if anybody had been watching him it could have been seen that there was less twisting of his queer face than usual.

The first call made upon him was in geography. Just at the moment when the question came to him, he was dreamily recalling the hot streets through which he had dragged his hand-cart on Saturday. He could remember the name of every street, and the question put sounded to him for all the world as if he had been asked for directions of some sort by somebody he had met on one of them. The right answer was in his

mind, somewhere, and it came to his lips like a flash and was out before he had time to think about it and stop it. He heard himself do it and was a little startled, but the same thing occurred again and again. He made the best kind of a recitation and his teacher chuckled over the mark she gave him as if there was fun in it. He felt that his dullness had dodged him in some unaccountable manner. Anything could get away from him.

"I don't know about it," he said to himself. "It's a sort of thing that'll never happen to me again. Now for arithmetic, and I haven't had any time to study it. I never could remember figures."

The number of every house he had left a parcel at was clear in his mind, with only once looking. Just so it proved to be with the examples he had gone over so intently that morning in his room. They were all there like the names on the parcels and the numbers on the houses. He had only "taken" them, precisely as he had taken his Saturday's list of errands. Both sets of figures had stuck in his mind because he had not rubbed them out in any way, and his mark in arithmetic was the best he had ever made. It was just so with other recitations, until noon recess, and when he set out for home he was mentally struggling with a great puzzle.

"I did as well as Fin Harris or anybody else. How did that happen? Didn't study, either."

Chuck did not know that he was stumbling over one of the worst words in the English language. Almost any college professor could have told him what the trouble was. Poring and boring and parroting are not "study". They weary the eyes and the tongue and the ears, and do not exercise the mind. Chuck used his "mind" on his lessons that morning. He was dreadfully dull, to be sure, but he had studied as genuinely over his books as over his errands or over the amount of strong, Fourth of July gunpowder it would take to blast out the rocks for the foundation of the long row of new houses. The recitations, for the first time in his life, had very sensibly been left to take care of themselves, and things had come to his memory when called for as naturally as Bob's name or any other matter that was not punched out of sight by poking for it needlessly.

All this was precisely the puzzle Chuck worked upon all the way home, and when he got there he found his father and the rest at work upon another. This was an important one, for it was the question of getting Nap out of the stable and setting him at work. A rush of business had kept Mr. Gorrik behind the counter all the morning, and now there was a large accumulation of

sold goods that required rapid deliveries to many customers.

When Mr. Gorrik went to the stable and harnessed Nap he thought he had never seen a more quiet and submissive animal until he undertook to lead him out through the street door to the wagon.

Then there had suddenly arrived what is called a "crisis", for Nap hated one side of that door as badly as he did the other. He braced himself, he reared even, he backed into his very stall. The more Mr. Gorrik pulled him and whipped him, the more slender seemed both Mr. Gorrik and his chances of delivering any groceries that afternoon. He went in and told Mr. Purdy, but there were six customers in the store and Mrs. Purdy was helping attend to them, and all her husband could do was to say something hard and bitter about Mr. Brown and his honesty in the horse business.

Napoleon was aware that he was harnessed and that he was wrong end first in his stall. He had really no objection to work, if only that doorway could be removed from before him, and he came out and took a long look at it. Mr. Gorrik was bending half-way across the counter, asking Mr. Purdy what he had better do about it when Chuck came in from school, still wondering how he had happened to do those remarkable recitations.

"Chuck," said his mother, "go out and see if you can do anything with that horse. You got him into the stable; see if you can get him out again."

"It's of no use, Mrs. Purdy," said Mr. Gorrik, standing up very straight again. "I covered his whole head with a blanket and it only made him back and rear. He's a vicious beast, and he'll never do for the grocery business."

"Then I guess you licked him," grumbled Chuck, as he went to the back door, and the moment he was in the yard he shouted — "Hullo, Bob, come on!"

Hardly had Bob's sudden fit of delighted barking dropped off a little before Chuck's — "Hullo, Nap, are you in there?" was answered by a friendly whinny.

"Nap," said Chuck, as he entered the stable, "come out into the yard with me and we'll see what's the matter with you."

Nap had already turned half-way around and Bob was jumping and barking at him. The doorway was associated with the whip-lash; but that dog and boy with apples and brown sugar! Chuck had caught up a handful as he came through the store and Nap was still mumbling the sweet stuff when he walked out at the side-door into the yard, in company with the fellows he was upon good terms with. He had never in all his

life been flogged through a side-door like that. There was no kind of horror hung up over it to make him pull away from it. Neither had he any fear of a gate that only opened through a fence. He followed Chuck right along through the yard gate, as soon as it was opened, and into the street, and backed between the thills of the wagon very contentedly. Just then Mr. Gorrik came out of the house remarking — "It won't be of any use, but I'll see if I can help him."

His next remark was uttered in a tone of astonishment — "I declare! Chuck, how did you get him out of the stable?"

"Had to pick him up and carry him out," said Chuck. "Why didn't you think of that?"

"Carry him out? Did he come along of himself?" asked Mr. Gorrik.

"Right straight along, around by the side door, through the yard," said Chuck, with a wide grin.

"Oh, that's it. You don't say! What made you think of that?"

"'Cause you said he wouldn't come out through the other door. I didn't scare him with that again. It's just as short as the other way."

"Well! Now! I wonder!" said Mr. Gorrik. And he climbed into the wagon with an evident doubt on his face as to what mental peculiarity Napoleon might see fit to show next. In a moment more, both horse and wagon were in

front of the grocery and Chuck had gone in to get his dinner.

"He's all right, Mr. Purdy," shouted Mr. Gorrik, very confidently.

"Chuck did it, did he?" said Mr. Purdy, with a gratified air. "I wonder how he came to know so much about horses. There's a good deal that's curious about that boy."

"Indeed there is," sighed his mother, as she tied up a quarter of a pound of black tea. "I don't know what we are ever to do with him."

"Glad the horse is a good one, anyhow," replied her husband. "Load up, Mr. Gorrik. He's got some pulling to do now."

That was what Chuck said to himself when he thought of his afternoon recitations, on his way back to the school-house. Then he added almost recklessly —

"I don't care. I guess they'll have to take care of themselves. If I don't know them, why, I don't know them."

Perhaps that was true, but Chuck did as well in the afternoon as he had done in the morning. It looked as if he had somehow discovered a side door of some kind and was finding a way out of his difficulties.

Some mental obstacle had been in his way, as unreal and as much of a humbug as the wide stable door had been to Nap. Part of it may

have been "nervousness", but a larger part had been what he had supposed to be "study"; trying to pound things into his mind the wrong way, somewhat as if he had undertaken to eat his dinner with his ears. It had only made him more and more nervous until he "balked", like Nap, before the idea of learning anything from a book. It may be that for a great many boys a school-book is a kind of stable door, hung all over with disagreeable recollections. Whether Chuck was to recover from the evil effects of his experiences was yet a question, but he went home full of a curious sensation. He felt that he did not understand himself, and that is a great discovery to make.

"I guess I won't go straight home," thought he. "I'll walk around and take a look at those foundations. They're blasting for a sewer, too. Big one."

In a few minutes more he stopped short and exclaimed —

"Red flag. See 'em all run. It's a coming. I've just hit it."

He knew all about a blast. He had seen them drill the deep, round holes and put the powder in and set the fuse, and he knew that now a little fizzing spark was hurrying along to its work and would only give people time to get away.

Bang! And the man with the red flag swung it furiously.

"More coming, my son," said a voice at his elbow. And he had only an instant in which to glance up at a tall old gentleman with gold-rimmed spectacles, before there came another bang and again the red flag swung its warning.

"That's down in the sewer," said Chuck, as another dull, heavy report came to his ears. And the words were hardly out of his lips before yet a fourth sounded and a piece of rock as big as his head came plunging down into the middle of the street before him and the red flag dropped in token that all was over.

"Did you ever command a regiment in a great battle, my son?" calmly inquired the old gentleman.

"No, sir," said Chuck. "Did you?"

"Yes, my son, and that's the way a cannon ball comes down, sometimes. It doesn't hurt you a bit unless it hits you, but if that piece of rock had come three yards further" —

He paused, for Chuck felt a sudden interest in that stone and darted forward to look at it. The old gentleman followed him and poked at it with his foot, saying, "Gneiss".

"It wouldn't have been so nice if it had struck somebody."

"G-n-e-i-s-s," spelled the old gentleman. "It is a granitic rock. Primary. Igneous. My son, that bit of rock went to sleep right there when the

world was made, and now all of a sudden something has waked it up and kicked it fifty feet out of bed. How would you like to be treated that way?"

"Guess I'd think Fourth of July had busted under me," said Chuck. "But, Mister, it isn't waked up yet."

"Just so, my son. That'll do. Do you know one rock from another?"

"Yes, sir," said Chuck. "I know 'em. All the rocks around here are in the way."

"So they are, but you must get acquainted with them. Every stone you come to can tell you a long story. I won't tell it now. It's in a language called geology. Study it, my son."

"Guess I will," said Chuck; but he had walked on a little, while they were talking, and was now staring into a great chasm, two fathoms deep, that the sewer makers were opening along the middle of that street. The lower part of it was through solid rock, and there were both brick work and great earthen pipes to be seen.

"My son," said the old gentleman, "you never led a regiment and you don't know the rocks by their first names. Do you understand anatomy?"

"No, sir," replied Chuck, turning up one eye at him. "It's the way the doctors cut a man to pieces."

"Just so; and it's the way he is put together.

That sewer is part of the skeleton of New York."

"I didn't know it had one," remarked Chuck, doubtfully.

"All the streets, my son. What's under them everywhere?" asked his new acquaintance, beaming down upon him.

"Oh, sewers, Croton water-pipes, gas-pipes, cellars." Chuck paused.

"Pipes running out into all the houses?" said the old gentleman. "Great skeleton. Veins and arteries. Big body of the city couldn't get along without 'em. Never try to get along without your bones, my son. I must go, now, but as soon as you know all the stones in New York by name you will know more than you do now. Good-by."

"Good-by," said Chuck, as the old man who had once commanded a regiment walked briskly off, and then he added, "I wonder if he can recite all he knows. I can't."

He went back for another look at the lump of gneiss and spelled it correctly.

"I only heard it once. Didn't have any chance to study it. There's something the matter with me. Tell you what, though, I just will know the names of the rocks; I've got to meet 'em all my life. I know some, now."

He was turning them over and digging into

his memory for more when he walked through the side gate into the back yard. Nelly was there, feeding Bob and Dick and the hens.

"Hullo, Nelly!"

"Chuck? Fin Harris says he never heard you recite so in all your life."

"Well, I guess I never did."

She was crumbling a cracker so that the crumbs fell on the back of a hen and she was thinking deeply.

"Chuck, do you s'pose you can ever do it again — sometime?"

Chuck was also thinking and somebody else was listening. Before he could answer such a question as that, the voice of his mother came to him from the window near them.

"Was it an accident, Chuck? Do you know how it came to happen? I do wish you'd try" —

She did not know exactly what she wished him to try, and his answer had a doleful twang in it — "Now, mother, it's no use. They kind o' did themselves, this time. I didn't know one of 'em till they recited."

"Chuck," said Nelly, excitedly, "if you hadn't known 'em you couldn't have recited 'em. You'd study better if you wouldn't just sit still and make faces at your books."

"Guess it doesn't hurt 'em," said Chuck. "I

don't see why some things can't be remembered as well as others."

Dick may not have understood that remark, but he replied to it with an uncommonly shrill crow, and Mrs. Purdy added, "I'm glad you did it this time, any how. Come in to supper."

She meant Chuck and Nelly, but Dick crowed again, just the same.

CHAPTER VI.

A CAPTIVITY AND A RESCUE.

BOB had now rested in the back yard of Purdy's grocery ever since Saturday. It was by no means a bad sort of place. He had been well fed there, and not only Dick and the hens and the cats, but the human beings who came to visit him had treated him with great consideration. He had found some happiness there, for he had killed eleven rats, but he was now beginning to experience a sense of confinement. He was a country-bred dog, accustomed to great freedom of ranging, and the back yard was to him a very small coop of a farm. His habit of rushing at will in all directions had, in fact, lost him his other farm and his country master. He knew that the city was all around that yard, outside, and that the other members of his present family came and went at their will. Even the cat came and went, and Napoleon himself was locked up only at night. The matter weighed upon Bob's

mind and he spent much of his time near the gate or on the back steps of the house. Once he ventured far enough to send a fleeting glance into the grocery, but it hit the tall, slim young man there and made him shout so sharply that Bob's tail fell and he went back to the gate.

There was a new, wonderful and unlooked-for experience about to come to him. The boy whom he regarded as by all odds the star of the Purdy household, came out with a whistle on his lips and a bright, brass collar in his hand. Bob jumped at the whistle but the sight of the collar brought a whine into his throat. He at once remembered an old leathern affair by which his freedom had sometimes been restricted on his own farm. Still, he made no open resistance to having it put on, for he knew that such things were given only to dogs of value, whom people were anxious to keep out of mischief.

"He is going to tie me up," was the mournful idea conveyed to him, and he let that first whine express itself and afterward two more, one of them quite large. The back yard seemed narrow enough without any collar to help it, and Bob tried to lick Chuck's hand while he was putting the little padlock into the staple, but he heard it click and believed himself a locked-up dog.

Chuck was remorseless. He next took a long

and strong piece of cord and knotted one end of it into the side-ring of the collar.

"He means to tie me up in the stable," was the dreadful thought which came to Bob, but he asked no questions.

Just then a sound of wheels ceased in front of the stable-door, in the street, and the voice of Mr. Gorrik exclaimed, in tones of stern determination — "Now, sir, we will see whether you will go in or not! There won't be any kind of nonsense this time. Not with me. I don't allow any horse to fool with me, I can tell you that."

"Come on, Bob," shouted Chuck, as he sprang toward the gate, and the bark that answered him seemed to come from every corner of that bulldog, so intense was its expression of a willingness to go almost anywhere.

"How did he work, Mr. Gorrik?"

"Tip-top," answered that young man, briskly. "He's the best horse we ever had, when you get him a-going. Trots right off with a load."

"You've sweated him a little," observed Chuck.

"It won't hurt him," said Mr. Gorrik, and then he added, emphatically, "Now he's all tired out he may give up his old tricks and go into the stable."

"I don't believe he will," said Nelly, behind Chuck. She had hurried out just too late to see that new collar put on, and she added, "Everybody's cross when they're tired."

Nap was not cross, but he was not tired enough to forget what a stable door meant. He thought of whips and that sort of thing the moment he looked at it. Mr. Gorrik took him very firmly by the bit and led him away from the wagon. Nap knew that there was a whip in one hand of the slim young man, but to him it was rather in the hands of that stable door, and he backed away at once. Mr. Gorrik's face became severe and even fierce in its expression, and he began to ply the whip. Nap had expected it and he began to step around uncertainly. So did Mr. Gorrik, and he put one of his feet down on one spot three seconds too soon. In the third of those seconds Nap stepped upon that very spot, and Mr. Gorrik's tight boot and much that was in it were between the hoof and the pavement.

For a minute or so after that Mr. Gorrik stepped round more rapidly and uncertainly than before, making faces that Chuck himself could hardly have beaten, and Nelly tried to console him by saying—

“He didn't mean to do it, Mr. Gorrik,” while Chuck sprang forward and caught hold of Nap's halter.

Bob did not know what was the matter and barked first at the wagon and then at Mr. Gorrik.

“Come, Nap,” said Chuck, patting him on the nose; and while Mr. Gorrik sat down on the curb-

stone to hug his foot and be pitied by Nelly, the new horse was quietly led into the stable through the side gate, and as soon as he was in his stall Chuck brought him out an apple. Nap had a better and better opinion of that by-way to his oats, but when Chuck hurried out into the street again, Bob was nowhere to be seen. The hot June day seemed to have suddenly grown several degrees hotter.

"Gone? Nelly! Where can he have gone to? He'll be lost again!" exclaimed Chuck, excitedly.

Away he darted to the corner, and his shouts of "Bob—Bob—Bob!" were followed each one by tremendously shrill whistles. There were boys who declared that Chuck Purdy was the best whistler in that ward, outside of the steam engines, but his last call was cut in two by a sudden rush.

Bob himself dashed between his master's legs in a way that all but upset both dog and boy. His feelings on getting out had been uncontrollable and so now was his bark. A race up and down the street for two or three blocks had been an absolute necessity, but he returned very nearly in his right mind. Still, there was no use in expecting that kind of dog to do his following quietly. Chuck got hold of the twine and Bob kept it so straight for him that it was best to make a loop at the boy's end of it and put an arm through, for it would have used up fingers.

"I never saw a dog so jam full of life and mischief," remarked Chuck, not many minutes later. "He'd have been in three fights already if I hadn't had hold of him."

He had a great deal more of the same kind to say to Fin Harris, further up the avenue, and Fin could hardly tell how sincerely he admired that dog.

"Where are you going with him?" he asked.

"Going to look at the rocks, up above a hundred and thirtieth street," replied Chuck, somewhat vaguely.

"I know 'em. Don't know what there is about them that's worth going to see," remarked Fin. "What is it?"

"They're another kind of rock from what I saw blasted over there this morning. That's gneiss."

"What of it?" wondered Fin.

That was a poser. It was by no means easy for Chuck to explain the sudden interest he had taken in the earth he was born upon, but he found that Fin knew just about enough to catch the fever mildly.

"I know limestone," he said, pointing at the flags of the sidewalk under him. Then he pointed at the street pavement and added, "That's granite, and the brownstone front of that store, I don't know just what it is" —

"It's brownstone," said Chuck.

"There's another name for it besides that," said Fin. "I know some other rocks, but I can't think of 'em now. Let's go right up there. I'd like to see 'em; we can come back some other way and have a real good time."

They were "going a geologizing", but they did not know just what it was. They went and found the rocks and looked at them and found them very interesting. The ledge jutted out to the very line of Third Avenue and from that it swelled back and crept away in under a hill, to hold it up. On that hill were houses, churches, stores, and Chuck knew that these had been a village on their own account, up to the time when the great city opened its mouth and swallowed them — hill, ledge and all.

"Fin," said he, "they're shaving off the top of that hill. They're going to cut down all the streets that run over it and all the streets that run into it from the avenue. Oh, but won't there be some blasting, before all that gets finished! I guess there will."

"Let's go around and get on top," said Fin.

It was easy enough to do that, but somebody was waiting for them up there, whom they had not expected to meet. The way it had come about was this. Just about noon of that day there came along up Third Avenue a ragged and dissipated looking load of hay. The hay lay

down all over a great, spreading frame and held out a big wisp behind to tempt a goat to follow it.

The goat who saw the temptation and was led off by it was Billy himself. He obtained wisp after wisp and voted it very good hay, and for quite a distance he felt that he was doing very well. Then he came to a place, opposite the ledge of rocks, where the load stood still and the driver of it got down. He was a small man, but he had a long whip in his hand—as long as several wisps of hay—and Billy did not at all like the appearance of that whip. He liked it very much less when the man who held it undertook to find out whether a goat has feelings and when the cracker of the lash came snapping around one of his fore-legs. He used all his four legs nimbly enough for a minute or so afterward, and it seemed to him as if that ledge of rocks had been built for him. No human driver could have followed him successfully by the jagged path he seemed to invent as he made his way to the top of the hill. He felt safe then, and turned to look down upon everything and everybody along the avenue, including the hay and the driver. He believed himself perfectly at home on those rocks, and it was not long before he was made so. He was yet standing and surveying when there came some quick, light steps behind him, a noose of

rope was dropped over his horns and he heard a chorus of voices exclaim —

“Hurrah, b’ys! We’ve got him. Isn’t he a big wan? There’ll be lots of pul in a goat like that.”

They did not know Billy. In a second more the nearest boy was flat on his back and it required all the strength of three more, hauling on the rope, to prevent a series of charges that would have scattered them from the rock in rout and defeat. As for the knocked-over boy, he was a plucky one, for he sprang up shouting, “Hitch him! Hitch him!” and pointed at a piece of timber which for some reason had been set up there as a post, tightly wedged into a crevice. Billy’s angry dash after his captors brought him near enough to the timber and in another minute he was anchored. He could not pull up that post and he could not break that rope. The liberty so dear to the heart of a goat was gone from him.

Half a dozen boys were late that day, at the afternoon session of the public school on the hill, and were “kept in”, but they all paid Billy a visit after they were let out. Every boy of them brought him something to eat and Billy ate it, but he showed unmistakable signs of a bad and rebellious disposition. Perhaps he would have shown more had he known the meaning of the questions and answers around him.”

"Could we ever get the harness onto the likes of him?"

"It's tame him first."

"He'll butt the bones out of ye when ye undertake to get him down to the street."

"Put him intil the wagon wance and he'll draw like a horse. He's a foine old fellow."

There was therefore a goat-cart somewhere in that vicinity, and it was in need of Billy's services. He was to be tamed first, and that was one reason why he was alone when a party of three came clambering up the ledge.

"Chuck," said Fin, "look at that goat. Wonder what they keep him up here for. No pasture."

There was not, unless Billy had been fond of limestone, but Bob had broken loose as they came up and he sprang forward, barking, and Billy felt sure he had seen that dog before.

"Ea-a-a! Beh!" he said, very plaintively, and Chuck exclaimed—

"Hullo! What's that?"

It requires quick ears to distinguish one goat-call from another, they are so nearly of one pattern; but Chuck's ears and memory did not deceive him, and he answered it with a shout that had some surprise in it.

"Why!" said Fin, "do you know that goat?"

"Guess I do, and you ought to. He knocked

you over once. Billy! What are you doing up here? You never had any owner. You don't belong to any one" —

"Ba-a-a! Beh!" pleaded Billy, tugging desperately at his rope, but he made no resistance at all when Chuck put his hands on him. It was rather as if he looked up at the two boys and down at Bob and remarked silently—"You all know I don't belong here. Let me out. They're stealing me."

"Chuck," said Fin, "what are you going to do about it?"

"Do?" replied Chuck. "Why, nothing. As soon as the rope's off, he'll do all the rest. He'll take care of himself." He slipped the rope from Billy's horns as he said that, and added, "There, now. See the old rascal go down the rocks. Nobody's going to catch him again, right away."

It was not likely that anybody would actually catch him, but before he reached the avenue there were at least a dozen boys after him. The fact that every boy in sight was chasing Billy was one reason why none of them ever knew how he got loose. Besides that, however, when Fin Harris exclaimed, "Just look at them!" Chuck replied, soberly —

"Fin, we'd better get down from this before they get a look at us. There are too many of 'em and some of 'em are big ones. We'd get the

worst kind of a licking. Come on. These rocks are limestone—kind of marble; but I don't want to stay on 'em till those fellows find me here."

"I don't, either," said Fin. "The Melrose village boys were always a tough lot, anyhow. They'd pound us to a jelly if they thought we'd meddled with their goat."

"He isn't their goat," said Chuck, as he began to walk pretty fast; "but they wouldn't mind about that, and there's no police up here."

As for Bob, he had explored that ledge without reference to what it was made of. He had made up his mind that neither bones nor rats were there, and he came at Chuck's whistle promptly, entirely ready to be led somewhere else.

Billy ran very well, and so, for some distance, did his pursuers, and several small dogs joined in the chase. It was to the credit of Billy's good sense, on so warm a day, that he only seemed to care about keeping just a little ahead, and his would-be captors and trainers pretty soon made up their minds he could do it. When they came back, all out of breath, and climbed the rocks to investigate the matter, all they found was a post, an empty rope and a hard problem—"How did that goat untie himself?"

They studied the rope and they tied it and untied it, but not one of them could answer. It beat all the examples in the big arithmetic.

They gave it up at last, with the remark from a large boy — "It bates me entirely, but the next go-at we git a hold of we'll tie him up wid two ropes."

"He unslipped himself, that's all," said another, and what he meant by it nobody ever knew.

Chuck and Fin seemed to feel that they ought to talk about rocks as soon as they were safe beyond the reach of the Melrose boys, and Fin certainly had more to say than might have been expected.

Chuck got the idea fixed in his mind that his friend knew a great deal more about stones than he himself did. Some of the words he used were as long as your arm and entitled to great respect, but Fin was "reciting well", that was all, and it is a fine thing to be able to do.

CHAPTER VII.

CHUCK AND HIS MIND.

CHUCK'S mind had been at work with uncommon industry, all that day, but he was not quite sure what was the matter with him. He was conscious of a vague, dim idea, that he felt as if he had swallowed a yeast-cake and was beginning to rise. At the same time he told himself that his good recitations had been accidents and that he could not expect any more of the kind to happen. It was as if he had seen a top get up and spin itself and knew that it could not do it again, for he had never seen an accident happen twice. He did not know that no such thing ever happens once, and that tops and railway collisions have causes. At all events he went to his books, after supper, and it was not long before he found quite a strong resemblance between his brains and a top. He had never owned one that would spin worth a cent unless you knew how to do it.

It was right for him to go to work, whether he

knew how or not, and he stuck to it manfully. Just before he went to bed he made a pile of his books and looked very hard at it sidewise.

"I never studied harder in all my life," he said to himself, "and they've whipped me again. I don't know any more about 'em than I did when I began. Oh, dear!"

So far as he could see into the matter, his lessons had knocked him as flat as Billy the goat had knocked Fin Harris. He did not know of anything or anybody, inside of him, capable of taking them by the horns and mastering them as he had mastered Billy for Fin. He went to bed, and after a while sleep came and led the lessons away. His thoughts were wandering along one after another — "Fin Harris'll always beat me. So'll any other boy that isn't dull and that knows how to recite. The whole class'll beat me on examination and I'll get left back. I'll have to give it up and I wish I had a head." And at that place his eyes closed, and he drifted away from his books and all his other troubles into the land of dreams. Some of his dreams were remarkable, for one of them took him up to the top of an immense pile of rocks, of a new kind, only to find Bob there, trying to tie himself to a lamp-post. Then the rocks all changed into school-books, and when he awoke in the morning he could not remember the rest of that dream. Neither could he force him-

self to do any more "studying", for it seemed to him the most useless thing in the world. So it would have been, for he had done all that was necessary, and there is an old proverb about the waste there is in pouring water upon a drowned mouse. He dressed himself and went out into the yard. He looked around for Bob and whistled, but no dog answered or came.

"Guess he's in the stable."

It was a bad guess, for Napoleon was all alone, and Chuck felt suddenly that it was a great trial to have the responsibility of a bull-dog as well as of a Grammar School put upon him.

"He couldn't get out. Perhaps he's in the grocery. I'll go for him."

He was an intensely anxious boy just then, but Robert the bull-dog was entirely secure. He had been transacting business for himself a little that morning. Hardly had Mr. Gorrik let daylight into the grocery and thrown open the back door, before Bob came marching in with a wisp of paper in his mouth. He walked up to Mr. Gorrik and laid the paper down before him, very much as if he desired to say—"There's my card. You and I ought to be better acquainted."

Mr. Gorrik picked it up and then Bob brought him a corn-cob, after vainly trying to pick up a can of tomatoes. What he really meant was—"Please don't send me out into the back yard. I

wish to know more of the ins and outs of this grocery."

Mr. Gorrik leaned away down over him and patted him. He was not fond of dogs and had an idea that they sometimes bit people, but he saw clearly that Bob was full of the milk of canine kindness.

"He won't bite," he said to himself. And then he said thoughtfully to Bob, as if trying a doubtful experiment — "Rats, Bob! Ra-ats!"

He was at that moment standing at the head of the cellar stairs, and he instantly caught hold of the hand-rail. That was because, as it seemed to him when he afterward tried to think about it and recall the circumstances, that the dog he said "rats" to had dashed around him and over him and through him and between him.

The full truth was, that Mr. Gorrik had hit the mark only too well and that Bob had followed a rat down the cellar stairs with such sudden vigor that he nearly compelled Mr. Gorrik to follow them both.

"What a dog that is!" remarked the slim young man with great emphasis, and when, a few minutes later, Chuck came in, asking excitedly — "Mr. Gorrik, have you seen Bob?" he was reprov-ingly answered — "You had better get him out of the cellar, at once. He is breaking things. There! Do you hear that?"

It sounded like the jingle of shivering glass, and Chuck hurried down the cellar stairs.

"Bob! Bob! Bob!"

A discontented whine replied to him, for Bob had been vanquished by a rat. What with barrels and boxes and stacks of odds and ends to dodge behind, every rat in that cellar was safe and could laugh at him. Perhaps they had done so, especially when a pile of empty bottles he pawed into came rolling down upon him, littering the floor with smashed glass for Chuck to sweep up.

"No use, Bob. Come up out of this."

Bob consented to go, but he first looked around for a stick and carried that up-stairs to Mr. Gorrik.

"Good dog — poor fellow," said the slim young man as he leaned over and patted him, and he did it now much more confidently than at first.

Chuck could now go and give Napoleon a rubbing down and feed Dick and the hens and Bob, but what with one thing and another he did not get at his lessons again, and breakfast time was upon him unawares. He was growing more and more despondent about his books and after breakfast he completely gave the matter up. He tried to recall his lessons, but they would not come back, in spite of his long, hard work of the previous evening, and he prepared himself for a bad day. When he got into the school-room, at last,

all the hot weather in that ward seemed to have gathered there to make him feel uncomfortable. Then he became aware of something more dreadful still.

“Miss Thompson’s looking at me. She’s grinning. What made her wipe her face, all at once?”

The teacher in charge of that class was a bright-eyed, curly-red-haired young woman, with a great many freckles and a dangerous disposition to see all the fun there was in anything, and the boys were afraid of her. Not a boy of them but would have stood on his head rather than be laughed at, or think he was, by Miss Thompson. She had wondered a little at Chuck’s performance the previous day, and she saw all sorts of things in his face that morning. He sat there mourning over his bad memory when the first question came to him. He hardly cared to consider what it was, and so he just answered it and let it go, like an ordinary, out-of-doors question, from one of the boys. He looked more and more dejected until he suddenly discovered that he had gone through without a mistake. One more of his accidents had happened to him and he began to wonder at it. He was so full of curiosity about it that his next recitation also had to take care of itself, and it made Fin Harris turn around in his seat to look astonished at him.

"I've done it again," said Chuck to himself, and then he looked at Miss Thompson sidewise, and felt very hot. "What made her turn away so suddenly? Oh, she's coughing. It's bad to have a cough in summer."

See kept her handkerchief before her mouth for half a minute, and she did not look again in Chuck's direction for some time. He looked mainly at the floor and ceiling, and all that came to him that day made his puzzle worse for him. As he thought about it, on his way home—"Nobody could expect as stupid a fellow as I am to understand how I came to do it. I'd clean forgotten every word of 'em. All the 'rithmetic examples came out just as if I'd been making change behind the counter. They kind o' seemed easy."

That was all very well, for one day's wonder, but no such thing could happen three times in succession. Chuck did all he could to prevent it, anyhow, for he studied like mad all the evening, and he was at it again as soon as he awoke in the morning, neglecting the back yard and stable entirely, and he went to school in a sort of fever that grew worse and worse until the very moment when Miss Thompson called upon him. She might about as well have asked that question of Billy the goat, so far as any answer was concerned, and Chuck felt almost as if he wanted to

cry. His face twisted itself in all directions and Miss Thompson had another fit of coughing. He tried to wrestle with his mind, but he could not find it to wrestle with and had to give it up and break down. Now he had given it up, things were in better order, inside of him, and when his turn came in the next lesson he was thinking of Nap and Mr. Gorrik. He came within an inch of answering —

“Lead him around through the side gate,” but he caught his tongue in time and the right words tumbled out over it before he could forget them. The corners of his eyes went away up, and he went through the rest of that lesson fairly well. He was so encouraged by that that he gave his entire mind and attention to the next one and got nervous and made a wonderful failure. He did not win any more high marks that day, and after school Fin Harris asked him — “I say, Chuck, why don’t you study some at home? I do.”

“I study hard enough,” groaned poor Chuck, “and I don’t know what’s the matter with me. Besides, something worse has happened.”

“What’s that?” said Fin.

“Why, you know there’s going to be some general exercises two weeks from Wednesday, and Miss Thompson says I’ve got to speak Ironsides.”

“It’s a good piece, Chuck.”

"Don't care if it is. I never did one before in all my life."

"Oh, pshaw! You couldn't break down on that. It's the easiest kind."

Chuck groaned almost as deeply as he had done when Miss Thompson called him up and told him what was coming to him. There was no one to tell him that it made her feel like coughing every time she tried to imagine him delivering that poem before the school. The principal of the Grammar School was a very dignified man, but he knew Chuck Purdy, and when Miss Thompson told him what she had done, the corners of his eyes went up suddenly and his mouth puckered and his head turned on one side as if he were trying to take a twisted look at something.

He said very little, and neither Chuck nor Fin heard what he did say, but Nelly had heard of her brother's selection, and he found her and his mother worrying about it when he got home.

"Nelly! Nelly! He'll never get through in the world. He'll be sure to forget and break down, and he does so hate to be laughed at."

"It's real mean for Miss Thompson to call on him, anyway, mother. I don't mind it when it comes to me."

"Of course not, Nelly, and it isn't anything for you or for boys like Fin Harris, but it will be an awful thing for Chuck."

So she told him almost as soon as she saw him, and it did not make him feel any more hopeful. She also said to him — “You’d better let your other lessons go, I think, till you’ve learned Ironsides perfectly.”

“Guess I almost know it now.”

“But you don’t know it well enough to speak it that way. You must go over it again and again, every day, from now until next week Wednesday. Even then, you won’t remember a word of it, standing up.”

All this was not very encouraging. Between her and Nelly, Chuck wished that the Ironsides had never floated. As for his lessons, he could not quite give them up. He went through them all that evening, but he went through them only once. The rest of his evening work was of such a nature that he awoke the next morning with an old ship of war on his mind. He had a vague idea that the British must have been dreadfully afraid of that ship. He was. She sailed around in his memory until school-time and after that she only tacked away long enough for him to recite when he was called upon. He did his recitations very well, for he was not afraid of them under present circumstances. He was hardly afraid of even Miss Thompson. What he could not understand was, how his floating enemy veered away and left him free to use his faculties at the right

time and place. She afterward got out of the way for a game of marbles precisely as kindly as if it had been an example in arithmetic, and Chuck did not know that it was because he was treating all alike.

He was not on very good terms with himself, when he went home, and so he went to sea again, mentally, in the Ironsides. He did not know how near he came to having a narrow escape that evening. It came just after tea, while he was out in the yard.

"Business is growing," said Mr. Purdy to his wife. "The ward's filling up fast. New customers 'most every day. I've got to have a boy to help."

"Well, now," said she, "I suppose that's about so. It was more than I could do, to-day, to attend the people that came in while you and Mr. Gorrik were out with the wagon. One woman with two baskets wouldn't wait till her turn and went somewhere else. Nellie helped, as soon as she came in from school, but you know how she hates it. Chuck didn't get home in time. Now what if I should get sick some such day?"

"I hope you won't. Just don't. Nellie's beginning to put on airs."

"Well, you know she's a girl."

"I've got to have a boy. Somebody's got to go out with Mr. Gorrik a good deal of the time," said Mr. Purdy, gruffly.

"Nap stands real well."

"'Tisn't that. It takes two. Chuck's vacation's coming. I don't know as he needs any more schooling. Doesn't seem to do him much good, anyhow."

"Father!" exclaimed Mrs. Purdy, and then she drew four long breaths before she could express herself. "What! Chuck to give up going to school! So dull a boy as he is! Why, he needs it twice as much as anybody else does."

"Not in vacation time," said Mr. Purdy.

"Now, father, Chuck mustn't lose his vacation! He can't afford to lose it, and he shan't lose it, and I won't let him lose it. Get a German boy. Half the people in the ward are Germans, and neither you nor I nor Mr. Gorrik can speak a word of it."

"Most of 'em can speak English a little, but then, Chuck" —

"No, father, we're not so poor as that. Nellie ought not to tend grocery. She's going to school as long as I can keep her there. So is Chuck. He shall have every day of his vacation."

How Chuck Purdy would have hurrahed for his mother if he could have heard and seen how she stood by him in his hour of peril!

She even grew red in the face before Mr. Purdy was quite convinced, but as soon as he saw that, he gave it up and agreed to get a German boy at once.

"I'll get one of just about Chuck's size and age," he said. "I don't know about it. All the customers kind of take to Chuck, and he can call every one of 'em by name if he's heard it once."

"That isn't where his dullness comes in," said his mother; "and he must have schooling."

There was more talk, while Chuck was up-stairs at his books, and then Mr. Purdy had to go out and help Mr. Gorrik rush around for five lady customers and four errand boys who all had swarmed in at about the same time.

There was no doubt left, however, but what the result of it all would be a German boy, for two of those women had to point at the coffee boxes and otherwise explain what they wanted, and one little fellow almost choked himself trying to ask for a five-cent bag of salt.

"Mother," said Nelly, when she heard the news; "then you won't have to tend counter?"

"Not so much, my dear."

"And they won't need me?"

"Hardly any, I should say; nor Chuck, either. His time'll come for business by and by, but he's got a good deal to learn."

"Oh, how I hate it, mother! It doesn't belong to me," said Nelly.

"How about your mother, Nelly? You're too good for it."

"Mother!" exclaimed Nelly. "I didn't mean any such thing."

"We were very poor when we started," said Mrs. Purdy. "We are not poor now, but we are not rich yet, and I must tend counter a little longer."

"So must I, then! I'm going right out there now."

It is a good thing for any boy or girl to get healthily ashamed of a silly notion. The deep, red flush on Nelly's face when she went behind the counter did her credit, but it might have been deeper if she had been at somebody else's tea-table that evening, or near enough to hear some things that were said across it.

This other table was not set in a little room behind a grocery, but in the front basement of a well-built, brownstone house, in a block two streets back from the avenue. The portly and pleasant-eyed gentleman who sat at one end of the table had no flour on his coat, as Mr. Purdy was apt to have. The lady did not look as if she had ever tended behind a counter, but her face wore a thoughtful expression, nevertheless. There were several children, and one of them was a very pretty girl of about Nellie's age.

"Mr. Cramer," said the lady, "Julia says that her cousin Jennie is to be valedictorian of the graduating class."

"Humph!" said the gentleman. "That's very well, but who is to be the valedictorian next year? How near will you come to it, Julia?"

"I guess I could come pretty near, if it wasn't for Nelly Purdy."

"Going to beat you, is she? I've heard you speak of her before."

"Of course," said Mrs. Cramer. "She's the brightest girl in Julia's class. Have you put her name on your list for your strawberry party, Julia?"

"Why, mother," began the pretty young lady, and then she paused and looked uncomfortable.

"Is there any reason why she should not be invited?" asked her mother.

"The grocery, mother—and I've seen her behind the counter—and her mother, too," stammered Julia.

"And you're just a little behind her at school, and she isn't good enough to eat strawberries and cream in my parlor," growled Mr. Cramer. "Does she go barefoot?"

"Why, father! No; and she dresses well enough and she's pretty." And once more Julia paused and colored as if it was not easy to put into words the precise difficulty with Nelly Purdy.

"I'm not pretty," said Mr. Cramer; "and I never was, but I went barefoot when I was a boy.

If Nelly Purdy is a nice girl and will wear shoes she can come to your strawberry party."

Mrs. Cramer had been silent, and it was not at all clear but what she sympathized with Julia.

"Mr. Cramer," said she, "I never tended counter and I never went barefoot" —

"You was very pretty," he interrupted.

"Not so pretty as to hurt me," she replied, merrily. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take a walk and stop at Purdy's grocery. If I can have one good look at Nelly, I'll know just what to decide."

"Mother," said Julia, "that isn't all. While you're there, just try and get a look at Chuck."

"What about him?" asked her father.

"The awkwardest, queerest, oddest boy, and he's dull and way down in his class. No manners, and I just can't invite him."

"Good boy?" asked her father.

"Oh, he's good enough," she said.

"That's the boy for me," laughed Mr. Cramer, heartily. "Dull and odd and ugly and good."

"Not so very good," said Julia.

"Never mind," remarked her mother. "I'll settle about Nelly first; we can talk about Chuck afterward."

"That's it," said Mr. Cramer. "I'm a very proud man, myself. I always wore shoes on Sundays and when I went to a party. So did General Grant and Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Jack-

son. No girl or boy can come to a party at my house barefoot, not if I have to buy shoes for 'em."

Proud or not, he went off into some stories of how the boys and girls managed their merrymakings when he lived on a farm, away back among the Dutchess County hills.

The first important result of all that tea-table talk came to Nelly Purdy when Mrs. Cramer walked into the grocery. She had never been there before and had never seen Nelly, but there could be no doubt when she did see her as to who she was.

Mr. Purdy was at the desk, making entries in an account book. Mr. Gorrik was doing up some brown sugar for a little old woman, and had the end of the string in his mouth, but he leaned over the counter in a silently-bending bow that seemed to say —

"Good evening, madame. Glad you've come. I respect your kind of lady exceedingly. I'm the young man to wait upon you. What can I do for you in our line, madame?"

It was all in his face, but Mrs. Cramer swept past him to meet Nelly's prompt forward movement. She did not know that the thought in Nelly's mind was —

"It's Julia Cramer's mother! I don't care!"

Neither did Nelly know that Mrs. Cramer's

thought was — “What a very fine color she has. Almost too much of it, and her eyes are as bright as diamonds.”

So they were, and she waited upon Mrs. Cramer with a crisp energy which had no nonsense in it whatever. She filled orders for herrings, raisins, baking-powder, a box of blacking and a broom, before Mrs. Cramer felt that she had given a sound business reason for coming to that grocery. By that time, too, there had been several questions and answers, and it may be that Nelly was a little more dignified than ordinary. At all events Mrs. Cramer’s mind was made up and she said —

“You are Miss Nelly Purdy?”

“Yes,” said Nelly, with a small bow.

“My daughter Julia is to have a strawberry party, a week from Friday. We shall be glad to have you come.”

Nelly knew that her father heard that, but not that it made him add up some figures wrong. She knew that Mr. Gorrik heard it, but not that he instantly leaned inwardly and outwardly toward that strawberry party. What she did not know was, that Mrs. Cramer fully approved of the matter-of-fact straightforwardness with which she accepted the invitation and promised to have the herrings and other things delivered in the morning.

Mrs. Cramer walked out, followed by the bend-

ngest bow Mr. Gorrik had in him, and Nelly went as far as the door with her without bending perceptibly. Mr. Purdy looked after them, remarking to himself—"I guess I missed it about Nelly. No airs. No nonsense. It'll pay first-rate to give her all the schooling there is. Wish I felt as sure about Chuck. She's real bright."

Perhaps the most disturbed person in the house was Mrs. Purdy, when Nelly went in to tell her about the invitation. She had a great many things to say and some of them had not been reached when bedtime came. When Chuck was informed, he was not in the least disturbed, and remarked—

"Glad you're going, Nelly; but wouldn't it have been awful if she'd taken it into her head to invite me?"

He felt that he had escaped something and that he had as much on his shoulders already as they could carry.

Mrs. Cramer went home without the least idea that she had done anything remarkable; but she had, and it began to dawn upon her when she told her own daughter what she had done.

"Then I ought to invite two or three more of the other girls," said Julia.

"Why, no; we can't ask the whole class," said her mother.

"I'm glad Nelly's coming. Was she behind the counter?"

"Yes; and I don't care if she was. At least, I didn't think I cared, after I'd seen her."

"That's it, mother. I don't want to be mean, but then" —

"Some people would feel put out about it? Let 'em. I know now what it was that came to me while she waited on me. The grocery isn't coming to the party; only Nelly Purdy is coming." Mrs. Cramer went on to make remarks about Nelly and about school-girls in general, and Julia was plainly reconciled to her mother's decision.

Chuck and Nelly were not the only members of the Purdy household to whom life was bringing important changes. Bob had been opening for himself an entirely new chapter of his city experiences, and his happiness was increasing fast. That morning, for the first time, Mr. Gorrik had led out Napoleon through the side gate, being fully convinced that he could not get him through the front door without carrying him. Bob had dashed out through the gate the moment Mr. Gorrik had opened it. Chuck had not been there to whistle and be obeyed and it was all in vain for Mr. Gorrik to whistle. Bob wagged his tail and looked at him, as much as to say — "Yes; that's a whistle. I know one when I hear it, even if

it's a very poor article, but I'm not going to be whistled by you. I've got some freedom."

There was no help for it, but when Mr. Gorrik got into the wagon Bob tried to follow him. It was too high a jump, and after several trials he gave it up.

"Wonder if he'd bite me if I tried to lift him," said Mr. Gorrik, and then he drove around to the front of the grocery to load up. When he came out of the store the next time, with his arms full, Bob was in the wagon. He had begged for a lift so hard, of a plaster-whitened workman who stopped to admire him, that he had been hoisted right in.

"Dose people steal not so much out of dot cart now," said his helper, as Bob dashed to the front of the wagon and prepared for all necessary barking.

"Of course he will let me get in," remarked Mr. Gorrik, doubtfully; "but I'll bring him out a piece of meat." And in a moment more he told Mr. Purdy — "Chuck's dog is in the wagon."

"Everybody else but you or me had better keep out of it then. He'll be worth his weight in stolen goods."

Mr. Gorrik nevertheless kept an eye on Bob when he took the reins and climbed in, and was much relieved by the fact that Bob instantly put his fore-paws on the dashboard and began to bark

furiously at Nap. At the end of that trip the slim young man reported to Mr Purdy —

“I do believe the horse stood better for having that dog along. I gave him some meat and he seems to know me.”

“Know you? Why, Mr. Gorrik, a dog like that knows more than half the men. Don’t you be afraid of him.”

In the wagon or under it, Bob had regained his freedom for all the hours when Nap should be in harness. Thenceforward, during all such peaceful intervals, the stable rats could race around in safety and all manner of cats could walk across that back yard with slow and dignified composure, instead of flashing madly from fence to fence with a growl just behind them. Napoleon understood the matter perfectly and almost seemed to expect to have Bob come in while he was being harnessed. He may have had a good dog of his own, in old times, on the farm he came from, just as Bob for his part had been accustomed to horses and wagons from his very puppyhood. We all remember best the things we had when we were colts and puppies.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHUCK'S SATURDAY DOWN TOWN.

IT was quite as well that Bob had gone into the grocery business. His master had before him a Saturday which called for a boy without any dog. Chuck's father laid the matter before him, on Friday evening, after a manner which almost made him hold his breath.

"Chuck," said Mr. Purdy, "the new boy's coming to-morrow, and Mr. Gorrik will have his hands full of him. Mine are full anyhow, and there is a lot of errands got to be done, 'way down town. One of 'em'll take you most to the Battery."

"To the Battery!" exclaimed Chuck.

"Yes; and some are on the East side and some are on the West side and some are all sorts. You can take the whole day to it and come home when you get ready. I want to see if you can do 'em right."

"I can do 'em," said Chuck, jubilantly.

"Well, I reckon you can," said his father.

Then it seemed to Chuck as if there was not anything more that he could say. A whole day in the city, with errands to take him to the very end of it! He knew something about the city, but he was like a great many other people who have grown up in its suburbs and outskirts, and to whom the greater part of Manhattan Island is almost an undiscovered country. Besides these, the city has grown so fast and all the people in it are so busy, from day to day, that its wonders, outside of their everyday walks and rides, are hardly known to most of them. Strangers come and look around and go home and tell their neighbors that they have seen it, but they have only had a confused glimpse of parts of it.

"I wish Nelly could go with me," said Chuck to himself; "but she can't and Bob can't and Fin Harris is going a-fishing, and I'll have to go alone."

It was worth while just to wake up, Saturday morning, with the prospect of such a day before him, and he went to the window at once to look at the weather. There was not a cloud in the sky, and Dick was exchanging crows with the roosters in the surrounding yards, beating them all. Chuck dressed himself with a care he had never before dreamed of and the bell rang for breakfast before he finished his hair and felt as if he were fit to be seen south of Harlem Bridge.

"You'll be back by supper time, I hope," said his mother at the breakfast table; and that was the first time he had thought of coming back at all, or of anything beyond his great Saturday.

"Of course I will," he said; "but I don't see how I can get through much earlier."

It was likely that he would not, if he should undertake all that was in his mind at that moment, for no single day has six months in it. His father took care that all the errands should be down in black and white, but Chuck felt sure that he knew every one of them. It seemed as if breakfast was hardly over before he was out upon Third Avenue and following it toward the great bridge over the Harlem River. The only reason for calling it a river is, that the sea-tides run through it, twice a day, with tremendous force, and make a sort of salt water freshet of it each time. It used to be the northern boundary of the City of New York, and now it runs through the middle of the city without having moved a foot. The Legislature made some new maps, and a round dozen of villages north of the old lines were marked "city" on those maps, and Harlem River had no voice in the matter at all.

Chuck was at the bridge quickly enough. He had crossed it scores and scores of times, but it seemed to him as if he had never before crossed it quite so much at one time. It was almost like

a new bridge to him, with its tremendous arches of wrought iron lifting their backs into the air in the steady strain of holding it up. If they should ever get tired out and drop it, he thought, what a crash there would be and what a splash in the Harlem! The tide was going out with a rush, and Chuck paused in the middle of the central arch to lean over and see it go. There were ships and steamers at the wharves on either side and he stared at them as if they also were something uncommon. A great barge, all one flutter of flags and streamers, was getting ready to take some grand excursion party somewhere, and a solitary musician was tooting a horn of some kind on her upper deck. Some of the very small boys of that excursion party had managed to get on board already, and Chuck was justified in remarking — "I guess it's a Sunday-school picnic. Ours won't go till after the Fourth. Hope those fellows'll have a good time and their old barge not run aground like ours did last year. Stuck us in the mud till the tide turned."

It was yet too early for any excursion boat to start, but there were a number of small row-boats to be seen. It is the only place around New York where oarsmen have a clear playground, and it is a very good one. The southerly shore, above Harlem bridge, is lined with the floating boat-houses of the "clubs", and there are some

on the northern side, besides all the establishments that offer "boats to let". There are more pleasure boats on one mile of the Harlem than on any other piece of water in the country. Chuck counted four elegant "racing shells", mere skeletons of boats, with out-riggers to carry the oars.

It was good fun to see those long, pickerel-shaped affairs dart over the water, with the strong rowers in their gay club-uniforms swinging so steadily back and forth at the stroke, in perfect time. It was always good fun to stand still for a moment on Harlem bridge, and Chuck was not at all startled when he suddenly felt that it was moving under him as if it had become alive.

"Something's coming!" he exclaimed; "I heard the whistles." But he did not stir one peg while the entire middle arch of that bridge, a hundred feet long, swung around upon its central pivot. Two great gaps were left for the pilot of a tug to choose between. Behind the tug a schooner, loaded with bricks, was towing at the end of a short hawser.

"Lots of building going on in our ward," said Chuck. "I wonder where they made those bricks. I'd like to see 'em made."

It was wonderful that a little bit of a steam-engine, hidden away down somewhere in the masonry of that central pivot should be able to swing so vast a mass of iron as that central arch,

and with so many people on it; but swing it did, and the schooner was pulled through. Slowly and dignifiedly the great "draw" then swung back to its old place, the avenue could work again, and all the carts and people that had been compelled to wait, moved on. Chuck took one more long look down the Harlem, for a huge steam-scow was coming in, loaded with a train of railway freight cars, and so was a great Coney Island excursion steamer.

"She's a floating palace, they say, on their show-bills," said Chuck, as he hurried away.

He was now on the Manhattan Island side of the Harlem river, and he paused at the top of a flight of stone steps, leading down to the water. In every direction there were places where they sold oysters and clams and fish, and at the bottom of these steps was a broad float. Behind the float was a large boat-house and on it was a little one, and a long row of beautifully-modeled and buoyant-looking row-boats were fastened in front of it like so many horses tied to a fence, all ready to be mounted and ridden. Chuck stared at these for a moment and then he turned and stared back beyond the bridge. Every boy gets to a place, at some time, from which he can look back and feel that he has left something behind him forever. His next feeling is sure to be that he is going forward into something new. All that he

needs then is to actually go forward and to go in the right direction. It is best to follow a good road and not to follow some blind nonsense into any kind of ditch. There are a great many delusions, and they lead a great many little fools into ditches; but if Chuck Purdy was dull, and it may be that he was, he was not a fool. There was no gas in his head whatever, and his thoughts were coming back to him across the bridge when a hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Hullo, Chuck! What are you up to?"

"Down town. Away down. Errands."

"Just the thing. Tell you what, Chuck, if you'll do some for me I'll let you have a boat next Saturday. You can have it all day."

"I'll do it, Mr. Bunner. Will there be much to carry?"

"Not much. Parcels and letters. You're the boy for me."

He was just the man for Chuck. He owned all those row-boats, the float and the boat-house, and he charged a dollar a day for the smallest boat, but there were always a dozen or so tied up idle, and it did not cost him a cent to have his errands done in that way. He knew Chuck Purdy, as did almost everybody else, and there was no study needed to understand his errands.

"I can do 'em," said Chuck. "It's to be a regular, first-rate boat?"

"Haven't any other kind. Take your pick, but you mustn't bring but one more boy with you, unless it's a girl."

"All right," said Chuck, and in a minute more he was studying a railway question. Away above him in the air was the north end of the Third Avenue line of the Elevated Railway, and in all the world there is not such another road as that is. On the surface of the avenue under it were the tracks of the old-fashioned street cars, and here was the end of their line, also.

"Ten cents up-stairs on the Elevated and only five down here on the street cars. I never rode on the Elevated yet, and I'm going to do it, no matter what it costs."

He seemed to himself to be taking an upward step in life as he climbed the stairs to the ticket office of that wonderful railway—through the air. He bought his ticket and it let him through to the long platform where a train was waiting as if it waited only for him. It started as soon as he got into a car and the sensation it gave him was worth having. Right along past second and third story windows, just as if he was riding on nothing, he was whirled away.

Chuck was fairly started upon what he might almost have called a voyage of discovery. He had forgotten, for the moment, everything he had left behind him, leaving his head empty to stow some-

thing new into. He felt as if he did not exactly belong where he was, but he enjoyed his ride tremendously.

There was a vast deal to be seen through the car-windows of the elevated railway. Blocks of buildings, glimpses of long streets, wide reaches of house-tops, tall steeples in the distance, people at their windows, all went flashing by him, and yet he seemed to remember every square foot of it. He cared very little for the inside of that car, after he had studied it once, but he wondered where all the people came from and where they were going to. However completely he had forgotten that the world contained Grammar Schools, he did not forget one of his errands. They came up to be remembered carefully, every now and then, and he took a deep interest in them. He knew that his first duty would compel him to leave the railway at twenty-third street, just one hundred and six streets from Harlem Bridge. Then he would have to cross over to the other side of the city. There was excitement in jumping up from his seat, when he saw the station-number, and in getting quickly out of the train before it could carry him any farther. It was grand to go down, down, down the stairs, to the street below, and to step out into a new world that he had never before seen. He was no longer a schoolboy, for that Saturday, but a man of bus-

iness and a traveling agent of a grocery and a boat-house.

He was now marching away as a grocery man, but was able to say, "One of Bunner's errands isn't so far but what both can be done together. I'll just earn that boat!"

Chuck had been born and brought up very near to all he was now seeing or hearing, but for all that it was wonderfully new to him. It made him feel a little confused in mind and dreamy. The subtle charm of the great city was upon him, and he could not have put it into words. Nobody can, but it is a great fact. Thousands on thousands of people will always be led by it so strongly that they prefer to live in the city, even in poverty, to living anywhere else in peace and plenty. Other thousands get over it, as if it were the whooping-cough, and go somewhere else that they are better fitted for, and gain much by going.

Chuck felt, all over him, that he was a city boy, and naturally belonged right where he was. That made the charm and dream of it stronger, and he almost felt as if he owned something that he had never owned before.

"Now," said he to himself, "I'll do errands all the way down, but I want to get to the lower docks and see the ships and steamers. I'll hurry every foot of the way."

So he did, but he was not to get down town so

rapidly as he intended. He turned into Broadway, on finishing his first errand, with a clear idea that it was the longest and finest business street in all the world. He also knew that it was the "backbone" of Manhattan Island, with several other and minor backbones running alongside of it, and with any number of rib-streets going out from it to the right and left. It was grand to be a business fellow, marching down the backbone, and Chuck looked up, cornerwise, at every building he went past. Just how far he had walked he had not kept count of, but he was suddenly called upon to stand still. So was everybody else, for a moment, and all carts and cabs and 'busses turned toward the curbstones, and a great shout and clang and clatter came tearing along the middle of the street.

"Three steam fire-engines, one after another," shouted Chuck. "Hose carts! Ladder wagon! Extra police! Big fire somewhere."

He dashed forward at a run to discover that fire, but he had only gone two blocks and a half before he was again stopped short. So was everybody else this time, also, for the fire was on the next corner, and the police were keeping the ground around it clear of people. There could be no crowd to impede the firemen, no thieves to steal loose goods, no rowdies to stir up any kind of disturbance, and no boy from beyond

Harlem River could get as near the fire as he wished.

All the engines and so forth had come down the street with their great spirited horses at full gallop, and with men clinging like bees to spots on the machinery where it seemed as if no man could cling, unless he was a bee, or a very vicious fly. As if that were not enough to excite people, everybody could now see that a tall, elegant, marble-fronted building was on its way to destruction. The thick, black smoke was streaming from the pipes of the fire-engines, but an enormously thicker and blacker and more threatening cloud was pouring out of the upper front windows of that building. It had not been set on fire for Chuck's amusement, but he had a strong feeling that it was a part of his holiday. He also felt that he would like to be a fireman, for an hour or so, at least. The wish grew stronger and stronger upon him for several minutes, and it seemed as if there must be a world of splendid excitement in a fireman's adventurous life. Then he saw a great ladder rising toward the upper windows of that store-front. How it arose he could hardly understand, and it was by all odds the longest ladder he had ever seen or heard of. Four firemen went up that ladder, round by round, lifting a hose and its pipe, to pour water into the third-story windows. It was an extraordinary thing to do, but

there was an especial reason for uncommon efforts to put out that fire. Chuck's eyes and mouth were open, from the moment they began to climb, but opened wider just as the water went surging up through that leathern pipe, and sprang from its brass nozzle. He saw great tongues of fire leap out from the windows toward those firemen. After these came puffs of smoke so dense and huge that the ladder and the men were hidden.

"It's oil or something," began Chuck, but he was cut short by a dull, heavy report, as of something bursting in the upper part of that burning building, and the smoke-closed curtains covered the men more densely than before, and a great cry of fear and horror went up from the watching multitude.

"Killed 'em all, I guess," said Chuck, with a shudder. "No, sir-e-e! I don't want to be a fireman!"

There was a stillness after that for a moment, that was only broken by the crackling of the flames, and then a gust of wind went up Broadway and swept the smoke from around that perilous ladder. There they were, the four brave fellows, half stifled, but unhurt and holding on hard, while the steady stream hissed through the window before them into the smoke and flame.

A first effort of the crowd to cheer only broke into a sort of roar of relief and admiration, but a

big fellow sprang upon a hose-cart and called for "Three times three and a tiger!" and as he swung his hat the cheers went up, and Chuck saw three ladies by the curbstone near him, all crying and all feeling with both hands for pocket-handkerchiefs that they somehow failed to find. They could neither wipe their eyes, nor swing anything, nor hurrah. Everybody was absorbed in the intense excitement of that affair on the ladder, and even the policemen forgot everything else for the moment. One of them was suddenly aroused by a sharp grip of a boy's hand on his arm.

"Hey, boy! What is it?"

"If that old gentleman misses his pocket-book, the fellow in striped pants has got it. Quick, now, before he can drop it or pass it on."

Chuck's rapid blink around him had been made to some purpose, and his eyes had caught what had been a very quick and scientific operation. Every other pair of eyes had missed it, but the actions of the "cop", as Chuck afterward called the policeman, were also quick and scientific. It was of no use for the man in striped pants to swell up and look indignant, although he had all the outward appearances of a gentleman.

"Pocket-book!"

That was uttered very sharply indeed by the elderly person whom Chuck next seized by the

arm, and was a sort of echo of the question put to him — "Have you missed your pocket-book?"

He seemed to feel all over himself for a moment, and his spectacles fell from his nose.

"It's gone! Where is it?"

At that very moment the "cop" was saying to his captive — "No nonsense, Jemmy, my boy. Out with it. I didn't know you at first sight. You're got up fine, and you've been out for a long while, this time. Come this way, sir. Here it is. Where's that boy? I want him for a witness."

The old man was just remarking — "Caught him, have you? Old offender, eh?" as the thief made a hesitating motion toward one of his side pockets; but Chuck had heard the word "witness" and turned on his heel to run.

"Hold on, boy! Stop him! Stop that boy! And Chuck stopped of his own accord, shaking his head and grumbling — "Just my luck! It'll spoil the whole day for me."

"Never mind any witnesses," growled the pick-pocket, with sullen fierceness, as he drew out and handed over a fat-looking wallet. "I'm cornered, this time. You won't need any witnesses. I was too far from a second take."

That meant that if he could have passed his prize along, it would not have been in his own keeping to prove him guilty. The policeman

handed the wallet to its owner, but kept his eye on Chuck, and was remarking — "I'll take his name and number, anyhow," when the old gentleman himself exclaimed — "I declare! I've seen that boy before. Nobody'd ever forget him."

"Don't think they would," said the policeman. "Ugly mug, but sharp as a needle. Spotted that cove for me when nobody else was wide awake."

"We were all staring at those fellows on the ladder. Look here, my son, did you blast out any more rocks? Know their names?"

"I went and hunted up some."

"Boy," said the policeman, "I'm glad he knows you. All I want is where to find you. Write it down."

Chuck's pencil was out, and one of his father's business cards, but while he was writing, the old gentleman went on talking and examining his pocket-book to see if it were all right.

"Glad you went for some more rocks, my son. It'll be Fourth of July, pretty soon. Bad time for boys. That scoundrel will plead guilty if he knows what's good for him. No more need of you, my son. There's a five-dollar bill."

"I don't know if I ought to take it," said Chuck, thoughtfully.

"He seemed to be a smart boy, too," added the policeman, reflectively, and Chuck's face grew very red indeed.

"My son," said the old gentleman, "it's just one per cent. upon the contents of that pocket-book. Take it, and cipher out the example."

"Five hundred."

"That's it, my son. You will be a merchant, some day. Go along, now." And the defeated pickpocket muttered, "So I missed a five hundred dollar haul and I'm nabbed".

Chuck's hand closed upon the five-dollar bill with a pretty hearty "Thank you, sir."

Nevertheless he felt inclined to hurry away, after that, although the fire was blazing magnificently and destructively. Both the fire and the watching crowds, engines, firemen, police and all, were exceedingly picturesque and worth gazing at, but Chuck Purdy was a business man with a good deal yet upon his hands.

"It's great," he said to himself, as he hurried away. "Guess I did right to take the money, but it's the biggest I ever had in my life."

The harder he worked at his errands, after that delay of the fire, and the faster he walked, the more his thoughts fixed themselves upon one spot ahead of him. He was put in mind of it at every step, and it was only a little after twelve o'clock when he got there. It was a chair behind one of the little tables in one of the eating-places in the far-famed "Fulton Market", and Chuck called for fried oysters and coffee. "Half dozen, fried,"

shouted the waiter to the cook at the blazing range, but Chuck added — "Make it a dozen."

The waiter had mistaken his customer for a boy, but Chuck was not only aware of his unexpected riches, but also of the fact that he was in the very best spot for oysters that there is in the entire world. Besides, he had been aware, through street after street, that traveling on business had made him hungry. When all was steaming before him, and he had drawn in three breaths full of the odor of those oysters, he felt that he had seen and done a great deal that morning. Both adventures and prosperity had come to him, and he would have missed them all if he had remained at home. He found the first half dozen oysters of only moderate size, but numbers seven, eight and nine seemed to be larger, and had to be eaten a little more slowly, while numbers ten, eleven and twelve had actually grown since they were put upon the table. He rested a little between oysters and cut number twelve in two, but there was an empty plate when he arose and put on his hat.

"Now for down town," he said to himself, "and the docks and the battery, and then for all the rest of the day only four errands to do, and I can finish 'em up in no time. It beats going to school all hollow."

Chuck Purdy had no sort of idea that this was the greatest kind of going to school.

CHAPTER IX.

NELLY PURDY'S SATURDAY.

THERE is nothing uncommon or wonderful about a strawberry party, and everybody knows that it is apt to mean ice-cream with the berries.

Nelly Purdy had been to strawberry festivals and parties and to picnics and all sorts of things, but she felt that there was something very special about her unexpected invitation to Julia Cramer's. She knew Julia well enough — that is, in school, but that had not, up to this time, seemed to mean out of school also. Her mother did not know Mrs. Cramer, and that family did not generally trade at Mr. Purdy's grocery. Yet Mrs. Cramer had come and given the invitation right across the counter. She had spoken of the strawberry party again while she was picking out a broom. At first Nelly wished that Julia had brought the invitation herself, and then she was glad that it came with all the dignity of Mrs. Cramer. She lay awake a

long time, the night after it came, and she did some mental dress-making, but she knew that her mother would be sure to attend to that. There was one of her dresses that was in her mind very comfortingly when she went to sleep, and she did not know that Mrs. Purdy's thoughts were at that very moment busy with the same dress and that she said to herself — "It will do very well. I've some lace I can put on, and it's time she had a new sash. There won't be many prettier girls there, if she is my daughter."

All the next day, at school, Nelly succeeded in being very busy, and she did not get near Julia Cramer until just as they were going home. She was almost glad that they were to go in opposite directions, and she could hardly have told why; but the fact was that Nelly was proud! She was twice as proud as Julia Cramer and four or five times as proud as Mrs. Cramer, all on account of the difference between the corner grocery and the brown-stone house.

"Nelly," said Julia, "mother says you've promised to come."

"Yes," said Nelly. "Isn't she nice?"

"Of course she is," said Julia. "Didn't you ever see her before?"

"Once," said Nelly, cautiously; "but I didn't know who she was. Are many of the class coming?"

"Yes," replied Julia; "a whole lot of them. Not all. There'll be more from outside. We'll expect to see you."

Nelly said, "Thank you very much", as she smiled and nodded and turned away, but there was a sort of feverish rebellion in the thought in her mind. "But I'm going out to tend counter again, this evening, whether they need me or not. I'm as good as Julia Cramer, and so are father and mother."

Perhaps she would have been less disturbed if she had known how really honest were Julia and her mother about it, and that her invitation had to do with her standing in her class and not with brooms and herrings.

The fact that Chuck had no invitation belonged to the other fact that he was not in Julia Cramer's class at all. He himself would have added — "And I'm almost nowhere in the class I belong to."

At all events, Nelly went out into the grocery, after supper, and her father sent her away at last, because he had no need of her.

That was what he told her, and **then** he told himself — "I don't know about it. There's no real need to have either her or her **mother** here with smart boys only four dollars a week and glad to come and learn the trade. She'd better stick to her books."

Nelly knew, before she went to bed, that Chuck was to spend his Saturday down town, and she awoke with a sort of dissatisfied wish that she could spend hers in some new way or other. She had company in her discontented state of mind. Bob was a dissatisfied dog. His mind was doubly unsettled by the facts that Chuck had brought him no breakfast and that Mr. Gorrik had not brought him his customary daily freedom. He had not been informed by anybody that Chuck was far away upon his travels and that Mr. Gorrik was leaning over a new boy. When the solemn face of Billy the goat came to the hole in the fence for the third time, Bob got up under it, upon his hind feet and barked at him severely. It was probably an effort to explain — "No bones for me. No greens for you. No nothing. It's a bad day."

Nelly's dissatisfaction increased as she heard Chuck, before setting out, telling his mother his plan for seeing all the island part of New York in one day. She knew he could not do any such thing, but she began to get an idea that she would like to take a look at something precisely opposite. That is, something neither island nor city. She thought and thought and one of her thoughts made her remember Bob.

"I don't believe he's had a thing to eat this morning," she exclaimed. "Poor fellow!"

She made up a plate-full of the best scraps she could find and went out to see him. By the time she was ready to go she was not alone, but Bob had learned to regard her with much confidence, and saw no reason to object to her bringing along another girl of about her own age, as well as so good a heap of scraps. After all, however, they were only girls, and his heart was going out all the while after either a boy named Chuck or a horse and wagon and freedom. He ate his breakfast without any mention of his longings, and the two girls talked quite industriously while they stood by and saw him do it. He did not gather the meaning of their conversation at all, and yet much of it directly concerned him. It grew more and more vivacious, as it went on, and it reached an important conclusion.

"Belle," said Nelly, "will you go?"

"Yes, Nelly, if mother'll let me," said the second young lady. "We'd be safe, with him, anywhere. That is, if he didn't run away and leave us."

"He won't," said Nelly. "There's a rope for his collar. We can lead him."

"He's a real good dog," said Belle, emphatically. "If you'll bring him around to the house and show him to my mother, she'll let me go as soon as she sees him."

"I'll ask mine. I know she'll say yes. We

can have a real good time. As good as Chuck's," said Nelly.

"We can go all the way to the seashore," said Belle, with enthusiasm in her black eyes. "He's a splendid dog!"

Bob was wagging his tail vigorously at that moment, but not because of the compliment paid him. It was rather because Nelly picked up the cord which dragged from his collar. That suggested a hope of being led away somewhere, out of the back yard. The hope brightened when she said, "Come, Bob." And it was not many minutes before he was on exhibition in one of the neighboring houses. A tall and good-looking woman stooped to take a stick he offered her and to pat him. "You may go, Belle," she said. "He would be worth two or three young gentlemen, if you should get into any trouble. Nobody will molest you, after a good look at Bob."

"Woof!" he exclaimed, just then, but it was only to express his desperate eagerness to get out of doors. He had already performed about the last feat of standing still that he was to do, that day. He did not yet know it, but he was to have a pair of young ladies to look out for and they were to lead him through remarkable ways. Neither he nor any other country-dog could have believed, beforehand, that so large a part of the city was no city at all, or that so many patches of

it bore a family resemblance to the woods, away back from the road, behind his own farm.

Neither Nelly nor Belle had any idea, until after they set out, that there was so much hard work to be had in leading one bull-dog. He also found that it was hard work to lead two girls, no matter how necessary it might seem to him to investigate the remarkable matters he saw in various directions.

Nelly had brought along her drawing portfolio, with a declared purpose of making some sketches, but it was shortly discovered that the same girl could not carry that, or the lunch-basket and lead Bob. For one reason, there were altogether too many dogs, pigs, goats and geese, in that part of the city, and they seemed all to have been turned loose, that Saturday. It was not so, however, for on any other day they would have been straying around just the same.

Bob and his two leaders went out through a street that ran eastward from the avenue, until they came to a bridge across a deep, narrow, swamp-banked little creek, and Nelly said —

“Look, Belle, the tide is in. Don't you see? It's full.”

“I wonder how far up it goes. Do you know?” asked Belle.

“No; but it doesn't go far. The new streets cut it off. Chuck says all this land used to be

under water. The seashore used to be a mile further up."

"How does he know?" asked Belle.

"He says he's seen it when they dug foundations for new houses or opened sewers. It's all sea-sand, after you dig down a little."

"And the sea left it there?"

"Yes," said Nelly; "and Chuck says that if the sea should ever come back again there wouldn't be much left of the city."

"He's queer. Isn't this the dirtiest, meanest looking lane?"

Belle looked disdainfully around her as she said that. It was a very dirty place, indeed, with small, dirty-looking houses scattered along at wide intervals. It had a lonely and deserted look, as if all the people had gone off to work somewhere else, except in one hollow where a swarm of ragged children were playing on the grass. Four of the larger girls were holding babies, and most of the boys were either playing marbles or pitching pennies.

"What lots of them," said Nelly. "Let's hurry through."

"Woof!" exclaimed Bob, at that moment; but his remark was called out by a loud, arrogant kind of bark which came from the door-yard of a cottage they were passing. That was followed by several other barks, but they were all of the same

sort and only one dog came charging out through a broken place in the fence.

"Oh, Nelly!" almost screamed Belle. "What a big dog!"

"Oh, dear!" responded Nelly.

He was a very large dog and the moment he was outside of the fence he seemed to them to be mostly growl. He was one of the savages belonging to that small city wilderness, and the two civilized intruders felt their hearts fail at the sight of him. Not until that moment had Bob appeared to be a small dog, but he did now.

"Belle!" gasped Nelly, "he's coming to kill Bob!"

"He shan't do it! Get a stone! Hold on to Bob!" shouted Belle, with a brave flash in her black eyes.

"I can't! He's got away! Oh, Belle!"

The whole swarm of ragged little people in the hollow had heard that last exclamation. It was uttered just at the moment when the great, yellow-haired, loose-limbed, mongrel monster came charging down, open-mouthed, as if he meant to eat up Robert at a few bites.

It was "Oh, Belle!" "Oh, Nelly!" "Bob! Bob!" for a long dreadful minute or so, after that. All that could be seen was a scurrying cloud of dust in the middle of the road. It seemed to contain anywhere from two to a dozen

dogs, mostly yellow, and to send out much noise in which Nelly did not once hear the voice of Bob. That had not been heard by anybody since the other dog came through the fence.

Suddenly the scurry quieted and the girls were once more sure that there were only two dogs. One of them was a very large, dangerous looking, yellow animal, and he was tugging hard but vainly to get his right ear out of the mouth of another dog, less than half his size, whom he had suddenly recognized as a bull-dog of the worst kind, a born fighter of great skill and superior ability.

The swarm of excited children were racing breathlessly nearer, accompanied by several small dogs, and it seemed as if they were all barking at once, dogs and children, except that two of the babies were crying.

The two girls had been dancing all around that battle in the dust and had very little idea what they had done or said to it, but now they suddenly felt calmer. Bob seemed like a larger dog and very much handsomer.

"Nelly!" shouted Belle. "He's let go!"

"Just see him run," said Nelly.

That referred to the dog whose ear was released because he had given up. Bob turned, panting and proud, to wag his tail triumphantly while Nelly recovered her grasp of the end of his cord.

It was very much as if he were trying to say to her — “Now don’t you be scared. I wouldn’t really hurt a poor yellow dog, like that. There wasn’t any fight in him. He’s gone home.”

Belle was also panting. When Nelly exclaimed, “I’ve got the string. We can hold him,” the answer was —

“Oh, Nelly! I threw eight stones, but I didn’t hit him.”

“I threw more than that,” said Nelly; “but all of mine went over the fence. Bob beat him without any help.”

“Just look at those children!” exclaimed Belle, “What are they going to do? Let’s walk right along.”

They did not do anything, but they were all friends of the yellow dog and they were all picking up stones. If there had been any more war, they would all have joined in on the side that belonged to them, but the war was over. There had not been any real dog-fight; only a bad blunder on the part of the quadruped who came through the hole in the fence.

The two girls went on with increased confidence in their protector. They were not followed, for all the children of that settlement were gathered around the yellow dog as he lay, panting in body and disappointed in mind, upon the front stoop of the small house he belonged to.

Nothing else happened, right away. Nelly acted as pilot, and between them both they engineered Bob through a ragged and bushy and rural-looking piece of woods with nothing city-like about it.

"That's the Sound," said Nelly, as they came out upon the shore of a wide and billowy reach of water.

"I know that," said Belle; "and there's the Small-pox Hospital, out on one of those islands. Think of being taken away over there to be sick!"

"Or to die," said Nelly. "I'm going to sit right down here on the old fort and sketch the islands."

"There isn't any old fort," said Belle. "It's only a ridge in the ground."

"Well," said Nelly, "it wasn't exactly a fort. Only a breastwork to fire cannon over. Chuck says so."

"How does he know?" asked Belle.

"Nobody knows how he knows about anything. He says Washington's men made it, in the Revolutionary war, to fire at British ships when they came in through Hell-gate. The British came and drove 'em away."

All that was left of the ancient breastwork was, as Belle said, a mere ridge of ground, but it was a nice seat for a young lady artist who wished to

make sketches of the islands and the water. Beautiful, white-sailed sloops and schooners were dancing along over the waves. One full-rigged ship was towed past by a tug while they sat there, and no less than four great Sound-steamers, two each way, swept along within range of the cannon which once had watched for war-ships across that mound of earth. It was all very quiet and dreamy and Summer-Saturday-like, but Bob was loose. He barked and investigated all along the shore, until at last he fell in over the slippery side of a rock, while he was trying to pick up a stick among the seaweed. About a minute later he put that stick down in the middle of Nelly's sketch and then shook himself tremendously.

"Oh, Bob!" screamed Belle.

"Bob—Bob!" exclaimed Nelly. "You've ruined it! Your stick came right down between the steamer and the hospital."

It was a wet-looking sketch and they decided to give up art and to hunt for shells and for seaweed specimens to press and to dry, but they ate their luncheon first.

At last the time came to go home, and on the way they saw a Gipsy encampment and kept Bob out of more scrapes and fights than they could afterward remember. It was a wonderful picnic, considering that it was all in the city, but it seemed as if it contained an uncommon amount of

warm weather. Perhaps Bob had something to do with the fact that he and his friends got back pretty early. At all events, something of the kind was reported of him to Mrs. Purdy. Belle's mother was there and she remarked —

“Well, he brought you both back safe?”

“Oh, mother,” said Belle, “it was so warm and he pulled so hard!”

“Nelly,” said Mrs. Purdy, “Mr. Gorrik was dissatisfied about Bob's going. He said Nap didn't stand half so well, and there was a small basket stolen out of the wagon.”

“I guess it wouldn't have been stolen if Bob had been in the wagon,” said Belle, but Nelly remarked —

“I don't care, mother; if I was going again I'd take him along. Only I'd want thicker gloves to hold the string with.”

CHAPTER X.

CHUCK AND HEAPS OF RICHES.

THERE is not a boy in all the world who knows how much he knows. There is not another boy in the world who can guess how little he knows. What is called education is the process of finding out both secrets, year after year.

Chuck Purdy was finding out a great deal during his Saturday excursion into the city. He made a good beginning with his first idea, for it seemed to him that he knew almost nothing. It was all the easier for new ideas to get into his head because they did not find it crowded with old ideas, so that they had no room to sit down in.

He turned away from the empty plate which had held his fried oysters, left Fulton Market and went on to the transaction of business with renewed energy. He had a curious feeling as he went along, that he was owning more and more of the great city, noise and all. His eyes took in block after block of buildings for him, as he

walked. Buildings? Why, it was all buildings, all around him, great and small, old and new. Some of them looked as if they had just come and were proud of their new clothes. Business? Well, it was nothing but "business", and there were crowds of men and boys to do it. Chuck could not help walking rapidly, as he finished one errand after another. The very air seemed full of rush and activity and enterprise, and Chuck felt that he had the same fever in him that was driving the other business men. He knew it would break out on him, some day, and he liked the symptoms.

After a little, he found himself standing on Broadway, in front of Trinity Church, and looking down Wall street. He could hardly have told just how he got there, without thinking back along the other streets and among the omnibusses he had dodged.

Chuck had been in that very part of the city once, long ago, but he hardly believed it now. He tried in vain to remember the old look of it.

"Guess I didn't see much that time," he said to himself, and it was just so. A fellow sees ten times as much on one trip as he does on another, and it is mainly because he is not the same fellow.

Much that Chuck now looked at was really re-built and new, but more of him was built up and new to look at it all.

He knew, now, that not one of those vast structures of brick and stone was going to fall down upon him, but they seemed to weigh upon his mind. The very thought of them was too heavy, and he tried to shake them off. It came into his thoughts for the first time, that somebody had taken a pencil and paper and had planned every one of those buildings, and that somebody had got the stones and bricks and lumber together and had built them, and that men who had heaps of money had paid for them and owned them. It was a tremendous idea, and it made him feel about the size of a marble, five for a cent. When he walked on down Wall Street he went so slowly and dreamily that people in a hurry jostled him as if he were something out of place and in the way, like a brick that had not yet been built into anything. It stung him a little and waked him up, but he did not guess how much waking up was going on in him. He stopped in front of the granite Sub-Treasury building and looked up at the bronze statue of Washington, and at the massive pillars behind it.

He had read all about that building again and again in the newspapers, but it had never seemed real to him until that very hour. It was different now, and he could almost believe he saw what he was thinking of. He knew that down in the steel-doored vaults under the Sub-Treasury were

heaps of bags of gold coin and of silver coin, and stacks and stacks of greenbacks and piles of Government bonds and cords of other things of perfectly stunning value and importance. It tired him to think of it, there were so many figures and he had so vivid an idea of trying to count it and of breaking down before he had more than just begun. He had to draw a long breath and turn in some other direction. What had he to do with vaults, full of treasure, after all? He was a mere boy at school, with a dog and a one-eyed rooster and a horse, and a speaking acquaintance with lots of other boys and with a remarkable goat. All of them seemed a thousand miles away, just then, but he glanced up Nassau Street and saw that a new building was going up.

"Big one," he exclaimed. "Just like one of these most likely. I wonder if they have to blast for a foundation, away down here. I haven't seen any rocks."

One idea pushed out another, and he was quickly leaning over a frame-work of heavy timbers and looking down into a vast hole in the earth, at the sides of which swarms of masons and their helpers were busily placing such foundations as he had never seen before. They were broad, massive, wonderful, and seemed almost the height of a house below the level of the street.

"Nothing but sand down there. Not a rock.

I wish that old gentleman would come along. He'd know about it. He'd get his pocket picked while he was looking at it. Mister," he asked of what seemed a boss mason, "what makes 'em go down so far?"

"It's going to be three stories under ground," said the man. "Got to be a deep foundation to carry the walls. Besides, there's got to be a cellar and a sub-cellar; and offices in the basement fetch the highest kind of rents. You can go down half a mile, anywhere round here, and somebody'll pay you well for slices of the hole."

"That's it," said Chuck. "Thank you, sir." And then he looked around him and felt as if his head were swimming a little. It occurred to him that in all the rooms, large and small, of those rows of great buildings, somebody was working and earning money, and not one of them was in any kind of business that he understood.

It made the world seem larger to him, all at once, but he had not the least idea that he was "studying". His thoughts were coming to him altogether too much in a crowd and would not stand around in order. They were strangers yet, and he could not manage them, and he turned and walked away.

Once more in Wall Street he went and stared at the huge, gloomy front of the Custom House and tried to remember all he knew of what it was

for. It took him only half a minute to rake his memory over and find out how little there was in it about "customs". He had just one clear idea, that all foreigners were made to pay the United States government for the right to bring their goods here and sell them to us, and that here was where the paying was done and that there was a great deal of it.

"Guess it's a fair thing," said Chuck. "They wouldn't do it if they didn't make money by it. Nobody compels 'em to send anything."

It made him think of the ships again, but he went from there to the Stock Exchange, only to find that he had not the ghost of an idea of what stocks were or what the Exchange was for.

"It's where they swap things so that every fellow loses his money except the Exchange," he said, aloud, and just then he heard a deep, hearty laugh behind him and a fat man patted him on the shoulder, remarking —

"Pretty close to the mark, boy; but if somebody drops money doesn't somebody else pick it up?"

"It kind o' depends on where he drops it," said Chuck. "If it's into a bonfire" —

"Walk right along, young man. Don't look at me in that way. You'll never lose your immense fortune on Wall Street. There's a bonfire here all the while. I've burnt my fingers in it, trying



CHUCK AT THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

to pick up what other fellows were dropping. Walk along. You're altogether too old a boy for this region."

Chuck was no wiser for that advice, but he walked along. He had one more errand to do, and beyond that was the "Battery". He was in a sort of fever to get there, and there was a fine breeze from the Bay blowing in his face when at last he leaned against a stone post at the Battery edge and gazed off at the harbor.

"It's the end of the city," he said to himself; "and I never was here before. There's Governor's Island and the forts, and Bedloe's Island with the statue of Liberty on it, and there are bigger forts further out. I'm going to see them, some day. Ships coming in, and steamers. Some going out, too. I'm going to take a look at a map when I get home. I guess geography's kind of worth while, after all."

It was impossible not to think of oceans and seas and islands, and other countries and their cities and harbors, as he looked down on the tossing waves of New York Bay. The thought stuck to him, as he strolled on, along past dock after dock and pier after pier, for they were all one steady hum of life and hard work, and of the commerce of all the earth.

"Hardly any little ships," he said; "but isn't that a monster!"

She was a grand, three-masted, clipper-built, full-rigged craft, of the very largest size, and her upper spars seemed almost beyond the reach of climbing men. Still, away up there on the dizzyest, slenderest kind of perch, was a sailor at his work. Chuck looked at him with a little shiver at first, and then, without any intention of trying to do it, he found himself repeating "Ironsides" from beginning to end. Dr. Holmes's poem seemed somehow to fit that ship.

"She must have been something like that," said Chuck; "only she carried cannon. I don't wonder it came hard to have her split up for kindling wood."

He knew how large some of the iron ocean steamers were, also, by the time he reached Fulton Market again; but there was a buzz in his head, and he hardly knew how he got to the City Hall from the market. He had bewildered himself a good deal, and he made it worse by trying to guess how many letters went in and out of the city Post Office every day. He stood and watched the wagon loads of mail bags, coming and going, until one of his thoughts took shape —

"I never sent a letter yet, except a valentine, and I never had one come to me, except a picture of a donkey with a standing collar. I can write, though. Guess it took a good many men to write all those letters."

That idea of writing drifted into another about the newspaper printing offices, in every direction. Daily, weekly, monthly, all sorts, of several languages, had stuck out their signs all over those rows of buildings. It was enough to make even a wooden boy think a little, just to look at them. He wanted to get away from it all, and he made a rush for a Fourth Avenue street-car that was going by, on its way up town. Just at that moment he cared very little to what place it would take him, and he was well on his way before he got the newspapers out of his head.

"It runs right into the Grand Central Railway Depot, at Forty-second Street," he said to himself, then. "I can go up from there to the Central Park and get home before night. I'm not tired a bit, but I could eat something."

Chuck had been in the Grand Central Railway Depot before, but when he got out of the street-car now, at the end of its trip, and looked around him, it all had a different look to him. There was a new boy in his shoes to look at it, and the enormous arched roof of glass and iron over his head seemed to look down and ask him —

"Chuck Purdy, have you any idea how I ever got here? It beats the peanut business all hollow. The fellows that made me used to be boys at school, too."

He could not make the least reply, but he had a

vague wish for a ride in each car of half a dozen trains then in the depot.

"Every one of 'em's going to a long string of places. Look here, now, if I don't travel some day!"

He was traveling, now, and making good use of his travels, and his next push forward carried him out of the depot and over to Fifth Avenue.

"It's where all the rich men live," said Chuck; "on it and along the edges of it". And then he caught himself spelling aloud — "P-a-l-a-c-e-s — palaces; and I suppose that's what they call 'em. Some of 'em belong to men that were as poor as I am, once. But then I guess there wasn't anything slow about 'em."

It made him think of Fin Harris and of half a dozen other bright boys above him in his class. They were the kind of fellows to go up in the world. He stared at house after house and walked slowly. Many were very magnificent, but Chuck had read somewhere that in other countries across the ocean, there were more splendid houses than these.

"What can they need of them?" he exclaimed. "What a big family it must take to live all over a house like that one on the corner!"

House after house attracted his attention, and when at last he reached the entrance of the Central Park it struck him that he had better find out

what time it was. A stream of carriages full of all sorts of people was pouring in and out of the Park, and so were streams of all sorts of foot passengers, and Chuck spoke to one of the latter who looked as if he might have a watch.

"What time is it, boy? Why, it's almost five o'clock."

"Thank you, sir." And then Chuck almost groaned — "No park for me to-day. Saturday's used up. I'll come straight here, next time."

He turned, somewhat reluctantly, toward Third Avenue, partly consoling himself with the reflection that the fare on the Elevated Railway was only five cents at that hour. It seemed to him as though he must have spent a pile of money that day. He had not bought a single building of all the hundreds he had looked at. He had not touched the five-dollar bill the old gentleman had given him for seeing the pickpocket. He had traveled a great deal, however, and he felt as if that sort of thing must be very expensive.

He climbed the stairs to a platform station of the Elevated Railway and a train came along in a minute. The car he darted into was packed so full that he remarked of it — "Like a box of sardines".

Swiftly and safely it bore him, almost to Harlem Bridge, thinning out its load at every station. He went to the boat-landing and made his report

to Mr. Bunner, but he did not stop a moment on the bridge, afterward. He reached home the tireddest boy he could remember having been in all his life. He had seen the city he was born in and he had seen it really for the very first time.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BUSINESS OF BOY-BUILDING.

DURING the Saturday which had been spent by Chuck Purdy in exploring the city, there had been a great change in the management of the grocery business. There had even been such a rush of customers that Mr. Purdy had remarked to his wife, at dinner-time —

“My dear, if this thing goes on we shall have to enlarge the building.”

“Nonsense!” she replied. “You’ll only need to knock away the partition and take this room into the store and put another story on top.”

“And build on a new kitchen,” said he. “We won’t do it right away; but the whole ward is building up, and they’ll all want groceries and things.”

They felt prosperous, and every thing about the grocery had a contented and improving look except Mr. Gorrik. That young man had an air

as if the world he carried on his shoulders were growing heavy.

Belle and her mother had hardly gone home before Mrs. Purdy turned to Nell and drew an uncommonly long breath.

"Nelly," said she, in a low, confidential voice, "the new boy has come!"

"Oh, has he?" exclaimed Nelly. "What sort of a boy is he? Where did he come from? Is he as old as Chuck?"

"Just about Chuck's age. He's a German and his family live below the bridge. I've only seen him once or twice."

"I want to see him."

In a minute or so more, Nelly and Bob were out in the grocery, but neither of them explained what they had come for. Nelly stood a little inside of the back door at first, and pretended to look all around the room at everything in it. She was really trying to take the measure of a boy, of whom she decided at once that he did not resemble Chuck at all, except in size. He was just then filling a small measure with potatoes, and it occurred to her that he did it very handily. She had no need to make believe not look at him, for he did not turn his head away from his work. Bob saw that boy and knew at once that he had somehow been added to the grocery, as he himself had been, and Nap. He may have been a lost

boy from the country, for all Bob knew, and it was proper that he should be investigated. Bob walked straight to him for that purpose. He smelled of him, and then he looked around the floor and picked up a piece of paper and brought it to him. Bob's instincts had promptly approved of that boy, but Nelly went back to talk with her mother about him. Bob's approval was of some importance, for Mr. Purdy remarked to Mr. Gorrik — "I like that. Dogs know more than we think they do."

"I think they do," replied Mr. Gorrik, vaguely; for he was at that moment reaching up for something on an upper shelf, and the effort seemed to pull him out and lengthen him. When he bent down again his first words were uttered commandingly — "Philip Zimmerman, take that."

A quick step turned away from the potatoes, a pair of bright, dark eyes looked as if they saw clean through Mr. Gorrik, and a voice without a trace of foreign accent asked, "Where shall I take it, sir?"

"Put it on the pile of show-goods out in front." And Mr. Gorrik pointed as if he had been directing the Star of the Empire how to go West.

Philip had gone in the right direction so instantaneously that he lost half the good of that pointing. He seemed to have picked up the whereabouts of matters and things in that store

wonderfully, already. He kept on doing it so rapidly that, just before Chuck's return, when Mr. Purdy had an errand for Mr. Gorrik, he was able to say, "I can manage, with Phil's help. I don't think I'll even need to call Mrs. Purdy."

That was why Phil was such a very busy German boy when Chuck at last came in. Bob was behind the counter also, at that moment, but he was on top of it the next and down upon the floor, and the dog-shout of welcome he gave Chuck told Philip who the queer-looking arrival was. It was not necessary to explain Phil to Chuck, but Mr. Purdy stopped short in the tying of a package of broken candy to listen. Could it be possible? Chuck was talking German with the new boy, and seemed to make himself understood very well. Then Chuck's face turned suddenly red, for Phil changed his language into English as good as had ever been heard in that grocery.

"That beats me," exclaimed Chuck. "How long have you been over?"

"I was only about so long when I came over," laughed Phil; "but I can't talk now, it's business. I learned my German at home and my English every where else."

"Just like me," said Chuck. "I guess my English is pretty good. How is my German?"

"Yes, sir; I'm coming," said Phil to Mr.

Purdy at that moment, but as he turned away he replied to Chuck — "Guess you got it of too many kinds of Germans."

"Got my tea and coffee mixed for me, did I," muttered Chuck; but he had to wait till his father had finished a customer before he could report his errands or go in to his supper. During that fidgety delay Bob brought him four pieces of paper, a chip, a small bottle and a smoked herring. It gave him a bit of rest before eating, however, and he may have needed one, considering how much he was to eat. His mother had known very well how it would be, and the piece of steak she broiled for him, as soon as she knew he had come, was a large one. She and Nelly had had their supper already, and were free to listen to an account of the day's adventures. He tried to begin at the beginning, for he felt that the whole story would prove a long one. There was no danger of his eating too fast while he was telling it, for both his mother and Nelly had questions to ask. They listened and listened, and wondered how so many things could happen in the sight of one boy in one day and he remember them all. Nelly was conscious of a higher opinion of her brother, and it deepened suddenly when he came to the story of the fire and the five dollars. His mother almost held her breath toward the end of that, and when he paused to pull out the

money she exclaimed — “I hardly know what to think!”

“There’s the money, mother,” he said.

“It’s remarkable!” she gasped.

“I guess so!” said Chuck. “Think? Why, mother, I never did so much thinking in all my life. Ships! Houses! Fire! Gold! Silver! Streets! Five Dollars! Pickpockets and police! Oh, dear me! I’m glad I’m home.”

He evidently had a strong sensation that his head was very full indeed, and that he would feel better if some of its contents should leak out. Telling the story was some relief, and he took the first opportunity after supper, to relate to his father the exciting tale of the five-dollar bill. When he said “Fourth of July”, however, his father interrupted him with — “I wouldn’t. Not more than a dollar of it. Put away the rest for a nest-egg. Tell you what, Chuck, if you’ll put it all away, I’ll give you your fire-cracker money. Five dollars is a good beginning. Old Cornelius Vanderbilt began with less than that, and he died worth a hundred millions.”

Chuck had studied three palaces that day, owned by members of the Vanderbilt family. A policeman he inquired of had told him to whom they belonged, and the thought of them made him look very hard at that five-dollar bill when he put it away in his box.

"I guess he must have been pretty well up in his arithmetic," he muttered, "or he couldn't have kept track of his own money."

There was something in that, and he tried to think about it after he got to bed, but it would not work. Commodore Vanderbilt seemed to be the Custom House, and to have long iron legs like the Elevated Railway, and Chuck was just asking him for some more fried oysters when the lids of his eyes came together tightly, and the next thing he knew it was Sunday morning. Sleep such as he had had was better than any kind of arithmetic, after such a Saturday's hard schooling.

When the sun pulled his eyes open and called him out into the world again, Chuck Purdy required Bob and Dick and the cat, and after them Napoleon and Billy the goat, to set him all right and make him feel at home. The whole day seemed odd and out of place, and when he got hungry he thought of fried oysters and Fulton Market.

It was almost as if he had eaten those oysters in another country, thousands of miles away. He recalled the smell and taste, and found that they had a sort of magic lantern panorama tied to them, for all the lower part of New York City came trooping into his memory—Wall Street, Broadway, Battery, ships, steamers and endless crowds of men.

"Nelly," said he, "I'd like to own a ship and make a voyage of discovery."

"Everything's discovered," said Nelly, "and it's all on the map. They've been everywhere and you couldn't find anything new."

"Guess I'd see enough that I never saw before," remarked Chuck.

"And you'd be awfully sea-sick," interrupted his mother. "I don't believe you'll ever own any ships."

That appeared to be the common opinion concerning Chuck Purdy, and many people might have added — "And he'll never own much of anything else, either."

He sat very still and soberly for a while, and then all the answer he made was — "Well, I wish it was dinner-time."

Something curious was going on inside of him, from hour to hour, that Sunday, and he went to bed at last nearly as tired out by it as by his Saturday's sight-seeing and tramping.

Sleep came to him faithfully and healthily, but he was out of bed by daylight on Monday morning, and he did not go down into the back yard. He opened his box and took out his five-dollar bill and looked at it, and carefully put it away again. He stared out of the window for a moment and received a "good-morning" bark from Bob.

"I don't believe Vanderbilt got his first five

dollars for catching a pickpocket. I wonder if he studied hard?"

That sent him to his books and his lessons with an idea that there was money in his arithmetic, somehow. He went over his lessons once and started to do it a second time, but when he took up a book it refused to open. It seemed to weigh a great deal and to lie still on his hands, and set him to thinking back. All the lessons of all the term came to him, as if he had begun at the Battery and had walked up Broadway, counting the rows of buildings.

Up to that moment he did not know that he had really learned those lessons, and that they were in him, and he had no idea that he was now "reviewing" them. That was what he was about, nevertheless, and he did it fairly well.

"I can't study this morning," he exclaimed, at last. "I'd rather curry Nap, any day, or feed chickens, than read a book or make figures."

He would have gone out to the stable at once if the bell had not just then rung to call him to breakfast.

"Chuck," said his father, when he went into the room, "didn't I hear you talking German with Phil?"

"He says it's several kinds of German."

"Don't talk anything else with him. It'll be worth a great deal to you to have practice. Take

every chance you can get. Where did you pick up so much?"

"Oh, among the boys," said Chuck.

"That's it," exclaimed his mother. "All the German boys in the school know their own language."

"So do the girls," said Nelly; "but their folks tell them to speak nothing but English."

"That's it," said Mr. Purdy. "Smart people. That's just what I want Chuck to do. Phil's English is as good as you could ask for and Mr. Gorrik says he talked French with a Frenchwoman."

"If I could get the knack of it," said Chuck. "Well, I don't know but what I've got it, some."

He was out in the grocery as soon as he had eaten his breakfast, and there was Bob watching Phil as he had never cared to watch Mr. Gorrik. There was apparently nothing interesting to him in Mr. Gorrik's way of doing up a parcel, or it may have been that Bob had it in mind to study German.

"Chuck," said Mr. Gorrik, a few minutes later, and bending in their direction—"Do not interrupt Philip Zimmerman in his work."

"I'll help him. So'll Bob. Phil, show me that list. Talk Dutch to me and see if I know the words."

The German lesson killed off any idea of again attacking the others, and Chuck went to school

under a cloud of discouragement as to his prospects. He did not know what he had been doing with himself until his actual recitations came upon him one after another.

"They're doing it themselves," he said, as they marched on well, to the close of the day.

"It's hit him again," remarked Fin Harris to himself. "How he does go it, though, every now and then when the fit takes him."

Nelly said something like that to her mother when she got home, and when Chuck met Billy the goat, after school, he stopped and looked at him sidewise — "Your head's hard enough, Billy. Wonder how much there is in it. Guess it butts as well one time as it does another. That's where you've got the start of me."

Nothing else happened to him on his way home, but when he got there Mrs. Purdy was after him sharply about his "piece". He stood stock still in front of her, with both hands in his pockets, and repeated it from end to end.

"You haven't missed a word of it," she said, with a very long sigh of a breath; "but saying it at home is a different thing from speaking it out before a whole school. Think of all the visitors, too."

Chuck had a momentary vision of himself on a raised platform, before a brilliant assembly, and it made him shiver. He felt absolutely sure that

the whole poem would get away from him under such circumstances, and that no amount of whistling would bring it back again. Nelly had repeatedly told him that she was sure he would forget it, and he had a great deal of confidence in her opinion. So had she, and her opinion had been strengthened much by what other people had said about her. There were seven hundred and fifty scholars in that Grammar School, half of them girls. It required a large supply of brightness to be one of the brightest among so many, and she knew by that, that her opinion must be worth something. Perhaps it might have been of more value as to the capacities of the girls in her own class, than as to a boy like Chuck.

Tuesday came along, and failed to bring with it anything remarkable whatever, except that Chuck did fairly well in his recitations and caught himself twice remembering old things that he had forgotten. He also counted seven new words of German that he had picked up from Philip Zimmerman, pronunciation and all.

As for that young grocery-student himself, Phil was beginning to settle his mind into an idea that he was continually leaned over by Mr. Gorrik. Even while they were driving around in the wagon, and delivering parcels, he was glad to have Bob sit on the seat between them, and bark at Nap.

Perhaps Mr. Gorrik would have known why one of their oldest German customers looked at him so merrily, if he could have interpreted a question she asked Phil about brooms and have understood Phil's reply. The next thing she did was to pick up one, and say in her own tongue — "This is the kind I want."

Phil sold her the broom and Mr. Gorrik grew more dignified all the time. He had never before had anybody to whom he could give orders, and it was working a change in him. He even spoke more sharply to Bob, so much so that a piece of paper was instantly brought to him, in token of repentance for whatever had gone wrong, and then an orange peel and the stub of an old cigar. Conciliation could go no further than that.

CHAPTER XII.

EVERY BOY'S BIG SECRET.

SOMETHING was getting to be the matter with Chuck Purdy, and he had not the least idea what it was. Nobody else could have told him, for it had not come out yet and there were no symptoms. The real trouble was with his ambition, and up to this time it had been so sound asleep he had not known it was in him. Now one matter after another was coming along to stir it up. The city itself had come, for one thing. That is, a Saturday down town had come, and some business errands and the city had worked hard at him all day. Before that and afterward, moreover, his accidentally good recitations had made a deep and lasting impression upon him. There had also been a serious disturbance in his mind occasioned by Miss Thompson's queer notion of having him speak Ironsides before the whole school on Reception Day. His ambition was not more than just a little awake, but it was beginning to reach

out and stir up all there was in him to a state of fermentation. He had a vague feeling that he was somehow getting badly tangled. That Tuesday he was very quiet all the evening, for the next day would be Wednesday, and in just one week from that he was to appear in public.

He did not go to sleep right away. He heard a sleepy crow that Dick made, but it was not that which kept him awake. The curtain was drawn from before his wide-open window and a great flood of moonlight poured in. It was almost bright enough to read large print by, but it was not that that was the matter with Chuck. He lay on the bed with both his eyes staringly wide open, and it seemed to him a great deal as if he were trying to pull aside a curtain somewhere within him.

"If I could only find out how to do it," he kept saying to himself, "I know I could do it."

After a while he added — "I'd just like to hear a real good speech made once, so I could know how it's done."

He lay and thought of halls full of people listening and applauding somebody on the platforms. Then he thought of sea-fights and of merchant-ships that sailed away through unknown seas and into marvelous harbors lined with glittering cities. Then he thought of beautiful houses, owned by boys who began with five dollars; and then of

business-buildings whose foundations went away down, down, down, through rocks and sand, to the deepest kind of all digging, and there his eyes closed in spite of him. In the morning he could dimly remember a dream that came afterward, of a Chinese pagoda, made of porcelain and stacked inside with chests of tea.

"Pagoda!" he exclaimed. "That's it. I'll buy a big one and touch it off on Fourth of July evening."

The one he had dreamed of in bed was supposed to be in China, while the one he proposed to touch off could be bought for fifty cents and was made of paper and gun powder. He had never yet purchased fire-works of that size, and the thought of it made him feel like an older boy and not quite so near to the foot of his class in school. He took hold of his books that morning in a manner which indicated a fear lest some part of them might get away from him. Not one of them did so, and even the examples in arithmetic surrendered with less of a fight than they had been in the habit of making. The other things wrestled with him a little, but he was able to set off for school for the first time in his life with a feeling of some confidence in himself. It went to his stomach as well as his head and made him walk straighter, but something in the expression of his face gave Miss Thompson a coughing spell

just before she called upon him to recite. He seemed to be looking at the point of his nose with both eyes, very much as if all the answers were there. Whether they were or not, he recited pretty well, and the idea came to him that he had somehow become a better looking boy. There was one practical result of it after he got home. He told nobody what he was going to do, but he took a box of blacking and a brush out into the stable and put a fine polish upon his every-day shoes. Bob sat still and watched him. Even Nap turned half round in his stall to see what was going on. Dick came, followed by one of his hens, and cocked his remaining eye at the shoe that was brightened first, and then strutted out into the yard and crowed tremendously. When both were done and Chuck had put them on, he had some doubts about going into the house. The family might say something, and so he whistled to Bob, who had recently returned with Mr. Gorrik and the wagon, and went out into the street through the side gate. He got as far as Third Avenue, and would have strolled away if he had not been called back by a voice from the grocery door.

“What is it, Mr. Gorrik?” said Chuck.

“Your father wants you,” shouted Mr. Gorrik, with a motion of his head forward to help throw the words, and as Chuck drew nearer he looked

down at those shoes and tried to whistle. He did not know how very well, and Bob half despised him for it, but Chuck felt his face redden. It made him give Phil Zimmerman, as he went by him, a punch that nearly upset him over a pile of hams, and he heard Mr. Gorrik say —

“Next thing he’ll be oiling his hair or getting it cut,” just as Mr. Purdy sung out — “Chuck, your friend, Mr. Miller, was here to-day.”

“Have I got to be a witness?” half groaned Chuck. “I’m glad he got back his pocket-book, though, anyhow. Did he say when I was to go?”

“He didn’t say any such thing. Only asked a lot of questions and left a package for you. Said he forgot about the papers in his wallet and only paid you one per cent. on the ready money you saved him. Said he wanted to be honest. Queer sort of an old fellow, but there’s fun in him.”

So very uncommon a kind of honesty was enough to arouse curiosity. Chuck’s face grew redder and redder as he cut the strings around that parcel and wondered how much honesty it contained, and in what shape. It was not large, but it was heavy for its size, and when the paper wrappers came off it seemed to Chuck as if his fingers had closed upon something hot.

“Boy’s Book, illustrated? Do they print such books as this is, just for boys? Splendid!”

Philip Zimmerman dropped a ham among some cabbages to come for a glimpse of that book, and the crowd around it grew fast. It was nearly square and very thick. The cover was positively brilliant, and every page Chuck turned seemed to have at least one picture on it. Some had half a dozen.

Bob was on the counter, as if he had heard somebody say "rats". Mr. Purdy leaned over from the other side to say, "I do declare!" Mr. Gorrik came and bent himself seriously over Chuck's shoulder, and Mrs. Purdy and Nelly leaned against him on the right and left. It was at just that moment that Billy the goat secured a fine bunch of radishes for his supper, from the platform. No more could fairly be asked of any goat, than that he should make a good use of his opportunities.

There was a great deal to be said about the book, and everybody except Bob tried to say something; but Chuck's own remarks did not seem to fit with those of any one else. They were disjointed, broken and altogether enthusiastic. He had seen books before, but never one like this, and he did not hear his mother's doleful remark to his father — "There go all his lessons. That'll spoil him for school; it ought to be locked up till vacation."

Chuck was saying aloud to himself at that moment — "I guess the fellow that wrote this book

knows every game I ever heard of. All the other games, too. Skating? I can skate a little now, but I never sledded it down such a hill as that. No, I can't fence and I don't box worth a cent. I can row a boat, but I never sailed one. Chess? Checkers? All sorts of things—riding horse-back, keeping chickens.” He paused there, for he had a sudden thought of how he would look mounted on Nap. He had not seen a picture there which did not stir in him and all through him a swift, hot longing to do the very thing it represented, and to do it well.

“Chuck,” exclaimed his father, “take your book into the back room. Mr. Gorrik—customer. Phil, pick up that ham. What is it, ma'am—coffee? Java? Yes, ma'am; best there is in the market.”

Chuck dropped the book on the counter suddenly at that instant, and the whole grocery seemed to be in confusion. A dog had come in with that lady who might have been Bob's brother, so far as looks went, but there was no brotherhood between them. They had drawn together with a low growling that swelled into a snarl of fierceness as they grappled and rolled in among the berries and vegetables. The lady screamed—“Oh, dear! Oh, dear! That dog! It's just so every time I take him out. There's always trouble and nothing can make him let go.”

"Oh, yes, there is," said Mr. Purdy, quite calmly, as he opened a tin box on a lower shelf. "It's the easiest thing in the world. No dog can sneeze and fight at the same breath."

He came out from behind the counter, and in a few seconds more Bob and his visitor were pawing their separate noses frantically. There was no more fight in them, but a strong disgust for pulverized tobacco, and Mr. Purdy remarked—"That's it, ma'am. I separated two men once in the same way. Gave each a strong pinch and they had to let go. I never use it in any other way, myself. Chuck, take Bob out and tie him up."

Bob was led away under a strong conviction that he had met a bull-dog, for once, who was in the habit of taking snuff, and he hated that kind of dog. So did the dog visitor detest grocery dogs, the taste of whom made him nearly sneeze his head off.

"It's awful wicked for dogs to fight," remarked the lady, "but somehow it's in 'em."

"Yes, ma'am; but it would break up the grocery business," said Mr. Purdy. "Sugar, did you say? Neither of 'em got hurt this time."

Chuck's hands were full of Bob, and he had said to Nelly—"Guess it'd have been about an even match, Nelly. You bring along the book."

Bob growled inwardly until after he was tied up

in the back yard, but Chuck did not hurry back into the house, as might have been expected. He went to the side gate and opened it and looked out. The street was nearly empty, though Billy was munching radishes close by the fence.

"There's such a heap of things I don't know and can't do," grumbled Chuck, and it seemed as if a sort of echo came to him—"Don't know. Can't do."

"It's a lie!" he exclaimed, so loudly that Billy thought he said "radishes" and trotted away. "I'll do something, I know I can"—

He could not get any further at that moment, but he turned and made a savage face at Bob, and went on into the house. He had given his mother time to think and act, however, and her first words to him were—"I've locked it up, Chuck. You can't have it till after examination, except on Saturdays. Lessons first. You've got to learn!"

"Oh, mother!"

She had no idea how much he was learning. She was a very fat and motherly woman, but she was as firm as a rock. Perhaps it was all the harder to move her because she was so heavy, and Chuck entirely failed to do so. He went up stairs with a heavy heart, and when he tried to look at his school-books there were wonderful pictures pushing themselves in between his face

and the dry, dull pages. It was a hard time, indeed, but suddenly there came to him a new idea and he caught it. Swiftly as he had glanced through that wonderful Boy's Book, as it lay on the counter, he could now recall clearly and distinctly every picture he had looked at, and every word of print he had read in it.

"One book's like another," he said to himself. "What's the use of going over a thing ten times if you can remember it just as well in once trying? Hullo! That's just what I did the other day, by all my lessons. Now, how did I do it?"

He had done it, and he was sure to do it again. He was discovering that he had a "mind", a great deal as Columbus discovered America; that is, without knowing it. He was finding out, also, that if a fellow has a mind and memory, it is better to let a lesson or that sort of thing right in, than it is to have it rub and scratch and rattle on the outside and call it "study".

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRAWBERRY PARTY.

CHUCK Purdy had known about Julia Cramer's strawberry party and that it was to take place on Friday evening of that week, but it had nearly passed out of his mind. It had not been absent from Nelly's mind, however, for any great length of time, since Mrs. Cramer's visit to the grocery.

It was not that the Cramers were such very great people, or that the party was expected to be so grand an affair, but then the invitation seemed to mean something. Was it possible that a very young lady, a school-girl, should begin to have an ambition? If that could be so, she was as blind about it as Chuck himself, and she tried in vain to understand why she felt as she did about the prospect of eating berries and cream in a house that was so much like thousands of other houses.

There may have been something in the fact that the invitation came to her across the counter,

in connection with baking-powder and herrings and a new broom. At all events, when Friday evening came, Nelly's mind was well absorbed by the tie and style of her new sash, and by the way in which her mother insisted upon doing up her hair. She made it look several shades more like that of a young lady and less like that of a girl who had yet a whole year of the Grammar School before her.

The party was to assemble at any time after eight o'clock, and when that hour arrived Nelly was ready.

"Chuck'll go with you," said her mother, "and he'll come after you at a little after ten. There won't be any late hours at such a party as that."

"Yes," said Nelly, in a tone which had much doubt in it.

"You wouldn't want to stay any later than the rest did and you wouldn't want to depend on other people for company home."

"No," said Nelly; and once more she seemed to have a great deal of internal uncertainty, whether it related to Chuck or to the proper hour for his coming to bring her home.

He on his part had gone to his room at once, after supper, and he had not gone to study his lessons. A thought had come to him with stunning suddenness.

"What if I should happen to meet some of

em," he said to himself. "Every girl in that class knows who I am. I must fix up a little."

Nelly's sash received only a little more than half as much attention as Chuck gave to his necktie, and the polish upon his best shoes was something that required more than one kerosene lamp to bring out all its beauty. He was waiting for his sister, when at last she was ready to go, and Mrs. Purdy was so wrapt up in a last study of Nelly's appearance that she could not have been quite sure, afterward, whether Chuck wore his hat and coat or not.

It had not been so with Philip Zimmerman. Mr. Gorrik leaned half-way across the counter, full of admiration, when Nelly walked out through the grocery, and Philip stood by him, saying something in German to Chuck.

"What's the matter, Chuck?" asked Nelly, as there came a great flush to his face and a twinkle to his eyes.

"I'll settle with Phil," he said, as they went out into the avenue. "He asked if he or Mr. Gorrik or Bob oughtn't to come along to get me safe home again. Then he said Bob wouldn't know me."

"What did he say about me?" asked Nelly.

"Oh, nothing, only that we resembled each other very much," said Chuck. And Nelly understood why there had been so sarcastic a grin on Phil's face at one of his remarks.

Whether or not Chuck resembled her, he took her safely to Mrs. Cramer's front door and rang the bell. All the care he had taken with his personal appearance seemed to be wasted, for the door swung open, Nelly passed in and it closed behind her, and the party did not get a glimpse of Chuck Purdy.

The glimpse he obtained of the party was confined to as much of it as just then happened to be standing in the hall, or coming down-stairs.

"Two hours and more," he said to himself, as he turned away. "I don't know that I care to go home. I wish it was to-morrow, and I could row a boat for two hours on the Harlem. Won't that be fun, though? I guess so!"

He walked off toward the avenue, wondering what he had best do with himself, and almost the next thought which came to him was that he was doing something altogether new. Never before in his life had he dressed up in his best clothes, of a moonlit summer evening, and strolled out with no other errand or duty on his hands and mind except strolling.

"They say Broadway and Fifth Avenue are splendid at night," he said to himself. "I mean to go and take a look at them some evening. I want to see some of those electric lights the papers tell about, and see the crowds and hear the music."

There was a dream of something vague and brilliant and wonderful before his mind at that moment, but it faded away and all around him was the moonlight and the almost village-like quiet of the Twenty-fourth ward.

During those first few minutes, while Chuck was trying to decide what to do with himself, his sister completed her arrival at the strawberry party.

That is, she was completely welcomed by Julia Cramer and her mother, and then by a very jolly, twinkle-eyed old gentleman, whom she already knew by sight as Mr. Cramer.

The parlors were full, and when Nelly came down from the dressing-room and entered them, she was very much relieved to find that she melted into the crowd like a snow-flake in water. One girl more or less made no manner of sensation, and all the rest of it was only a strawberry party and no more.

So it appeared to everybody, and no one else seemed to enjoy it more highly than did Mr. Cramer himself. It was not long before he was talking to Nelly and asking her, as he said, how much all the other girls knew. He laughed merrily over some of her answers and then he said —

“Well, Nelly Purdy, what’s the use of knowing so much? One of the stupidest girls I went to

school with owns a whole farm now, and manages it herself — makes money.”

“Couldn’t she do it just as well if she knew more?” asked Nelly.

“Can’t say,” said Mr. Cramer. “I’ve given up guessing how much people know. Do you see that tall young lady yonder? She’s too pretty to know much.”

“She’s quite pretty; but I never saw her before,” said Nelly, inquiringly.

“Well, that girl wasn’t at the head of her class in school. She must have worked hard, though. Harder than you or Julia are likely to.”

“How do you know?” asked Nelly.

“Oh, she learned something. Learned her drawing lessons, for instance. Then she went to the Cooper Institute and learned more. Now she’s teacher of drawing for some big schools and draws a big salary. She isn’t twenty-two, yet, and she had two pictures in the Academy exhibition last winter.”

“She’s a genius,” exclaimed Nelly.

“No, she isn’t. All the geniuses are dead. People have got to work, nowadays. Do you ever work?”

“Yes, I do, sir,” said Nelly.

“So Mrs. Cramer told me. Now I know a washer-woman, down town” —

“A washer-woman?” exclaimed Nelly.

"Yes," said he; "that's it. She owns a steam laundry, now, and keeps a bank account and lives in a fine house, but she began without one dollar except what she knew. Do you understand the grocery business?"

"Not very well," said Nelly.

"Guess not, eh? Well! I know another young woman that's getting rich on pickles and such things. There's no telling what women won't do next, now they're beginning to know something."

"Some of them write novels," timidly suggested Nelly.

"And some edit newspapers and magazines. That's so; but I'd rather make pickles. I don't believe words pay half so well as pickles. Don't you make any mistakes, now. Learn to keep grocery or do something else that's respectable."

"Earning a large salary!" said Nelly, as if talking to herself.

"And somebody may buy her pictures," said Mr. Cramer; "and by and by, when women vote, she'll be going to Congress."

Just then Mrs. Cramer called him away and Julia came to introduce a sandy-haired young gentleman to Nelly, with the remark that he knew her brother and Fin Harris.

It was curious how swiftly the time went by, and how often Nelly found herself almost staring

at the pretty young lady who had two whole pictures on exhibition in the Academy of Design.

"They sell there for hundreds of dollars," she said to herself; "and Bob put that wet stick right down in the middle of my sketch. The steamer and the smallpox hospital were wet through."

It was just as she began to collect her thoughts, after they had wandered in that way to the seashore, that she looked at the clock on the mantel.

"Five minutes past ten!" she exclaimed, in amazement. "Where can the two hours have gone to? Chuck'll be here soon, and nobody's the least idea of going home."

She had not, for she was beginning to understand that that party was somehow doing her good, especially Mr. Cramer's part of it and the fact that she herself felt entirely at home there.

As for Chuck, that very carefully-dressed young stroller had been having a remarkable time of it. He walked very slowly, after turning the corner near the Cramers' house, but he could not help reaching the avenue, before long. He walked down that until he came to a wide, open space, and stood still, looking in the direction of Harlem Bridge. All beyond that was the great city, and all the summer sky over it seemed to have grown bright and glowing.

"It's the light from the street lamps," said Chuck, aloud. "Thousands and thousands of

'em, and hundreds of thousands of lights from all the windows. It's brighter when there's a fire, especially if it's a lumber-yard or a planing-mill or an oil-refinery. It shines on the smoke."

The city seemed to draw him, as if it had a string tied to him, until he reached the front of his father's grocery.

The time for closing had not come and Chuck went in and sat down. His thoughts went first in search of the Grammar School and his lessons, for there was no one to interrupt them. Philip Zimmerman was talking French with a rough-looking man, who turned to two other men and a woman who were with him and spoke to them in Italian.

"A fellow ought to have gone to school at Babel," said Chuck, to himself, "to get ready to keep grocery in New York. All the folks that left there came and settled here."

His lessons led him right along to his examinations, and he knew he was not so much afraid of any of them as he had been.

"I'm kind o' remembering up," he said, in his thought about them. "I know a load of things that I didn't know when I learned them. That's curious, now!"

So it was, but his mind had worked away at its reviewing capitably well. His ambition had been secretly stirring up that business, as if it were all

the while finding new pins and where to stick them. The operation was all new to Chuck, and he had no idea what it was that made him look around the grocery now, as if he were trying to find out something. Mr. Gorrik had been busy over some matters with Mr. Purdy, but the latter had gone out now, and the thin young man came around from behind the counter.

Chuck hardly knew how it was that they got to looking at the printed labels of things, or how he began to talk with Mr. Gorrik about the foreign countries some of the goods came from. It staggered him a little at first, when he was told on just what street of New York city the French mustard was manufactured, and then where many of the other foreign-labelled things were really made. It was unpleasant to find that the Java and the Mocha coffee came from South America. Mr. Gorrik knew a great many things, and he seemed quite willing to lean over Chuck and tell him business facts until the time came to close the grocery. He and Phil were late about that duty, by reason of the information poured out by Mr. Gorrik, and Chuck was left in a thoughtful state of mind. He recovered himself somewhat and remarked, just as if Mr. Gorrik were still there —

“Chinese! You can’t counterfeit them. I’ve seen ’em at work in a laundry, and they’re the

real thing. They're more like women than men, but you couldn't do up a make-believe Chinese. That's so. Tea, rice, china—Central flowery kingdom—and they all smoke opium and blow water on the linen to sprinkle it."

He did not know how Chinese-like the corners of his own eyes went up as he added —

"They're awful workers, but they never spend a cent. I'm willing to work, but what's the use of making money, I'd like to know, if you haven't any way of spending it?"

He looked completely American at the end of that remark. There was no danger whatever that he would become a miser.

"It's 'most ten o'clock, Chuck," said Phil, just then, and Chuck sprang to his feet. He looked at them, too, and at once decided that his shoes needed one more touch of a blacking-brush. There was dust on them. Not one speck was on him anywhere, a few minutes later, as he marched out of the grocery to go to Mrs. Cramer's after Nelly. He had not been invited to the party, and if anybody had asked him he would have denied any idea of going inside of the house. He had no such idea, and could have denied it truthfully, but the idea had him and had made him do all the dressing up he knew how. It stood by him now when he rang the bell, and it walked into the hall with him when the servant who opened the door

told him to come in and she would speak to Mrs. Cramer. It was his good friend and kept him from being at all surprised when Mrs. Cramer came.

"After Nelly?" she said. "Oh, no; not for an hour yet. They're most of them in the supper-room. Come in and have some berries and cream."

"With pleasure. Thank you," said Chuck, and he was aware that he blushed tremendously on discovering how politely he had accepted that invitation. He knew, too, for the first time, that he had more than half expected some such accident as this to happen. He was not in the least aware how strong an impression he was making upon Mrs. Cramer, or why that good lady went after her husband as soon as she had landed Chuck on a chair at the supper-table. That included, of course, berries, ice-cream, three kinds of cake, a cup of coffee and some confectionery.

Nelly knew that he was there and that he was in no hurry, for she was so informed by Julia; but she had not seen the picture which had sent Mrs. Cramer after her husband.

"Come," she said to him; "you never saw anything just like Chuck Purdy."

"Julia described him," he said, as he arose to follow her.

"No, she didn't," said Mrs. Cramer. "Not in good clothes and on his dignity."

That was where Chuck was, and at the supper-table, too, in some doubt as to the rules of good society concerning cake.

"The cream and berries always go together," he said to himself; "but I've an idea the cake and candy come afterward. Coffee, any time, or it might get cool. I don't want to make any mistakes. Three kinds of cream in this brick — chocolate, pink-vanilla, yellow-lemon, and all prime. I know where they can get better maccaroons."

All that was mere mental exercises, while his eyes were at work among the company. There were not many faces there to which he could not attach some kind of a history, and so Mr. Cramer found when he came and sat down by him, after a look at him from the doorway. Chuck had seen him there, with just an effort of one corner of his left eye. The room did not contain much that he had not seen. That very slant upward of Chuck's left eye had been worth something to Mr. Cramer.

He determined to make the boy-addition to that party feel entirely at home, but it was only a minute before he himself felt very much at home with Chuck Purdy.

"Some of the other boys and girls are not much older than you are," he remarked. "For instance" — and he indicated a rosy-faced young lady nearly opposite them.

"Yes," said Chuck; "her father owns part of

the big lager-beer brewery, but there's four larger ones further up. That black-eyed girl's father does their coopering."

Mr. Cramer nodded gravely, but he went right on with his indications, and Chuck did not know that he was being pumped.

"Yes," he said, of one boy, "there's no bones in him, but his father was a blacksmith before he sold stoves, and Pete ought to have good arms."

"So he ought," said Mr. Cramer. "Who is the girl he's talking with?"

"Her father's got the city contract for the new sewer on Boston Avenue, and the men say he'll lose money on it, for there's a strike coming. The boy that just upset his coffee? Well, Jim's father's rich enough, only he doesn't guess how some of his men are cheating him; but Jim's in my class and he's the dullest boy in it, next to me. He'll never amount to anything."

"You're the dullest boy in the class, then, are you?" said Mr. Cramer; "away down at the foot of it?"

"Away down," said Chuck; "unless I happen to recite well when the examinations come."

"Break down on your recitations, do you?" said Mr. Cramer. "Sorry for that. Maria, bring Mr. Purdy another cup of coffee and another plate of cream. Have some more cake, Chuck. I must go, now, but I want to see you again."

A minute later he was remarking to Mrs. Cramer — "That boy knows the family history of every living creature in the Twenty-fourth ward. Such eyes and such a memory!"

"He's very dull, they say," said Mrs. Cramer. doubtfully; "and oh, isn't he awkward and homely!"

"No, he isn't," said her husband. "He eats his cream like a little man, and he'll know every wrinkle in every ribbon that goes past him. I wouldn't have missed him for anything. He's the gem of this party."

Probably nobody else thought so; but there is no accounting for the whims of twinkle-eyed old gentlemen.

At all events, Chuck received quite enough attention to keep him from feeling neglected, after he left the supper-table, and he was quite sure that the same was true of his sister. So was she, and she was more than half unwilling, when eleven o'clock came, to be among the first who went away from Julia Cramer's party. Mr. and Mrs. Cramer and Julia talked with Nelly and Chuck to the very door, and hardly had it closed behind them before Chuck remarked — "They're the best kind of people. Old Cramer used to go barefoot when he was a boy."

Nelly made no reply. She did not know that, in her brother's mind, Mr. Cramer's going bare-

foot was in some way connected with Cornelius Vanderbilt's ferry boat and his own five-dollar bill. It did not make him a better man, necessarily, but it made an object lesson of him for a dull boy to bear in mind.

Nelly was very silent, all the way home, in spite of the questions put to her by Chuck, from time to time. There was an idea in her mind which at last almost took shape, and she said to herself—

“Nothing but a strawberry party? Yes; it is. Seems to me as if I'd had a birthday and was older. Two pictures in the Academy. Made a fortune out of pickles—novels—washing”—

“Nelly,” said Chuck, just then, “we must get up good and early to-morrow morning. Don't forget the boat. Bunner says I'm to have it for all day.

“I'll be up and ready,” said Nell.

CHAPTER XIV.

SATURDAY ON THE HARLEM.

IF Nelly Purdy did not go to bed right away after getting home from Julia Cramer's party, her mother was partly to blame. Mrs. Purdy had to hear all Nelly had to tell before she herself felt at all like sleeping. She had many remarks to make, also, and some of them were about Chuck.

"I do hope he behaved himself," she repeated more than once, and the last time she said it Nelly felt called upon to reply with some energy.

"Mother," she said, "he did, and I wasn't ashamed of him at all, and old Mr. Cramer told me Chuck knew more than any other boy in that room."

"It's very strange," said Mrs. Purdy. "Chuck is all the while doing something that nobody can account for."

He was in his room at that moment, staring at a heap of school-books on his table and shaking his head pretty solemnly.

“To-morrow’s Saturday and I mean to have a good time,” he said; “but next week’ll be all examinations. Guess I won’t have a good time then.

He slept well that night, in spite of the party; but it may be that the attention paid him at the supper-table had something to do with the fact that he dreamed tremendously. He was out of bed and down-stairs only a little after sunrise, for he felt that such a voyage as he was entitled to, in one of Bunner’s best and jauntiest boats, ought to begin at about breakfast time. He had made Fin Harris promise to come around as soon as he had eaten his.

Nelly was down-stairs before long, and so was her mother. Mrs. Purdy seemed more than commonly proud of her children, and expressed her feelings in the kind and quantity of luncheons she put up for them. The grocery came to her assistance, and when Chuck stowed that luncheon away in the basket it made him think of maps.

“No,” he said; “they can’t counterfeit sardines! They’re from France or Italy. Caught in the Mediterranean. Never cared where they were caught. The oil they’re soaked in is French, too. Herrings? They’re from England. Caught in the North Sea, maybe. The smoke on ’em’s English, too. Crackers? They’re American. They were caught in Boston, and I mean to go

there some day, and tell Dr. Holmes I spoke his piece for him. Pickles? They grew 'round here, I s'pose, and nobody knows what pig that ham came from. We'll eat every ounce of it all before we get back. Mr. Bunner won't see his boat again till after sundown."

"Chuck," shouted Fin, as he came eagerly into the grocery, "have you got some fish-lines? I have. Mother said you were standing treat to everything else, and I must stand treat to some sand-worms. We'll buy a whole pint of 'em. Sometimes the fish bite first-rate. We'll take along some clams. Porgies'll bite on 'em."

Fin talked pretty fast, but Chuck's face was even redder than his with the excitement of getting ready.

"It's all right," he said; and I've got two quart bottles of root beer. We can get a jug of water at Bunner's, and we're 'most ready to go."

Everybody took an interest in setting them a going, and Phil offered to come along and help carry the basket, but Mr. Gorrik sent him on another errand.

In a few minutes after Fin arrived, a very enthusiastic bull-dog, a girl brim full of expectation, and two boys too full of they knew not what for any conversation, were all on their way to Harlem Bridge. It seemed a long walk for so

short a one, but they got there, and the boat was ready for them.

“Two pair of oars,” exclaimed Chuck. “Rudder, cushioned stern-seats, bang-up style — I say, Nelly, isn’t she a beauty? Safe, too.”

Nelly simply could not express her profound admiration of that boat.

The sand-worms were bought at the boat-house, and Nelly all but screamed when she saw them — “They’re just like centipedes, only some of ’em are half a foot long.”

So they were. There isn’t anything, unless it’s a big spider, that is uglier than a sand-worm. When, however, they are cut up into two-inch lengths, for bait, the Harlem and long-shore fish take kindly to them without regard to their looks.

As soon as the jug of water and the basket of provisions were stowed away, Nelly took her seat in the stern, and each of the boys prepared himself to handle a pair of oars.

“Where’s Bob? Bob!” shouted Chuck, and out from among the stack of boats in the boat-house rushed a bull-dog who was willing to search all the navies of the world, so long as they were on shore, but who had a desperate aversion to even a boat-ride. Bob sat down upon the float and whined and looked dismal, but he did not come into the boat of his own accord.

The next thing he knew he was picked up by one of Mr. Bunner's men and dropped in, well forward, at the moment when the boat was shoved off and the rushing tide swept her away. Bob put his paws on the front seat for a moment, and barked fiercely. Then he lay down to consider the matter, for he was at sea in spite of himself.

"Isn't this great!" shouted Fin.

"Mind your oars," replied Chuck. "There's an awful tide. Steer us for the middle arch, Nelly."

A proud girl was she, for she knew how to pull upon the little hand lines of that rudder, and make it point the boat rightly. Her eyes were darker than Chuck's, and they danced and glistened with excitement as the strong flood of the Harlem and the steady pull of the two young rowers swept the boat swiftly on under the shadowing bridge.

"Hurrah for fun!" shouted Chuck.

"Isn't it bully? Hurrah!" replied Fin, and all Nelly had breath for was, "Oh, boys!"

A mere dwarf of a steam-tug went by them as they darted out from under the bridge, and they were rocking in the little swells it made when it was followed by the "steam-launch", the tiny pleasure-steamer that makes regular trips up and down the Harlem all summer. It was her first trip that morning, and she had no passengers on

board, but the next thing Nelly steered away from seemed to be all passengers and no boat. Perhaps it was rather all oars and boatmen. It was a large "racing-shell" from one of the club-houses along shore, and six brawny young fellows in it were taking their morning exercise and training. They wore a blue flannel uniform that left their arms bare, to show the swell and action of their splendid muscles. It made Chuck feel of his own arms, and guess whether or not rowing would bring him out to the right size.

The oars of the "shell" were worked through rowlocks upon outriggers, and the sliding seats of the rowers were in a sort of long well with a rim around it. Outside of that the deck of their boat was about upon a level with the surface of the water. The long, sharp ends of the boat projected fore and aft, and she went through the water at a marvelous rate, as the oars arose and dripped and flashed and dipped again in perfect time and unison. It was well worth coming to see, and Chuck and Fin took off their caps and gave three cheers, and Nelly joined in, but her hat was tied on firmly and she could only swing her handkerchief. The racer shot under and through the bridge before those cheers were finished.

"Up river, now," shouted Chuck. "It'll all be swarming with boats before noon. Steady, now,

Fin. Don't let's tire ourselves out. I move we just navigate right ahead, though."

"Don't let's stop anywhere yet," said Fin. "The tide's taking us right along, and we'd better go it while we can."

A few minutes more and they went under the railroad bridge, next above the one which carried Third Avenue across the Harlem, and just as they did so an express train thundered over their heads on its way into the city. Somehow, the racket made by that train stirred more ideas in Chuck's head than any railway had ever before succeeded in doing.

"Fin," said he, "just think of what goes over that bridge. Hudson River Railroad, New York Central, Harlem, New York and New Haven, half-a-dozen more I don't know — think of all the places those roads come from and go to across that bridge."

"I couldn't do it," said Fin; "it's too much like reciting geography."

"Don't you remember it, after you've recited it once?"

"Not much; not after examination, anyhow. It kind of dies away, all except some things on the map that I've heard of somewhere else."

That had been the way with Chuck's own lessons formerly; but they were changing into something new, because he was himself changing.

"We'll get to McComb's Dam Bridge pretty soon," said Chuck, a little later. "What lots of boat-houses there are along shore. Any number of racing-boats in them, too. And all the race-horses go over that bridge," said Chuck; "all the fast teams that trot on the boulevard. I move we go over there some day, and see 'em go."

"We can go as easy as not," said Fin, and Nelly exclaimed — "I'll go, too, if you'll let me. May I, Chuck?"

"Next Saturday, then, or some time in vacation. We won't stop this pull till we get way up. It's the strongest kind of a tide."

So it was, but nobody would have guessed as much from the smoothness of the surface. A great, deep torrent of salt water crowded along, filling the broad channel brimming full, and spreading out over all the flats that bordered it. Men who were rowing against it knew very well how strong it was, and it rippled and chuckled to itself around the piers of bridges and the prows of anchored vessels, as if it also knew.

Chuck and his crew of two dashed under McComb's Dam Bridge without asking why it was called so, or how long it was since Mr. McComb had been compelled to tear down his dam. It was there once, nevertheless, and it forced the tides to turn a mill-wheel, and it was in the way of boats and had to get out.

They were not far beyond the "race-horse bridge" before Chuck turned his head to look forward.

"Nelly! Fin!" he exclaimed, "there's High Bridge."

"Croton Aqueduct," said Nelly. "If that should tumble down, what would the city do for water?"

They ceased rowing for a moment, and the boat drifted with the tide. Away across the Harlem, from the heights on Manhattan Island to those on the northern shore, there stretched a range of gigantic granite arches. These upheld upon their shoulders a mass of masonry, and this enclosed the channel through which, with the speed of a mill-race, pours the water required for the daily life of a million of human beings. The answer to Nelly's question is a pretty heavy one. If the Croton Aqueduct should tumble down, the people of New York would have to leave the city until it could be built again, and Chuck told her so. All the water in the reservoirs within the city limits would only last long enough to let the people get out of town, and there would have to be a great deal of hurrying even then.

"Chuck," said Fin, "let's go up there some day. You can walk across it to the other side."

"Yes," said Chuck; "and I'd like to follow it up country as far as it goes, and see the lakes

it comes from. They say there's fishing in them."

"And nothing to dirty the water. Suppose we anchor pretty soon, and try for some fish here."

"There's a good-looking place, by those rocks. We can try it there awhile, and if they don't bite we can go further."

Half a mile or less beyond High Bridge a great rock lay out in the stream, and just below that they threw out the heavy iron wedge, with a hole in it, that served as an anchor. The tide was slackening a little, and it was not a bad time to begin. Before long there lay upon the bottom of the boat a half dozen little fish, looking like what the country boys call "shiners", only wider and with sharper noses, and not one of them was more than eight inches long. Fin shouted "LaFayettes" when the first one came on board, and Chuck said, "Frenchmen".

Then came three or four chunky fellows of the same length that were set down as tom-cods. These were varied with as many dark, short, heavily-built "bass", and then came a season of long faces, for all that either of them could get a bite from was a monster that only seashore boys know anything about. The meanest, slimiest, ugliest, most useless toad of the salt sea is the "sculpin", and he swallows a hook entirely because he is mostly head and mouth.

Bob had barked at every bridge and boat and fish until the sculpins began to come in, but he drew away from them. No self-respecting dog could cultivate such acquaintances as they were.

"Chuck," said Fin, "they make me sick."

"Hold on, Fin. Something better than a sculpin's tugging at my hook. Steady, now."

In ten seconds more a sprawling form of blueish green came up just to the surface of the water, and at the moment when a girl and two boys were exclaiming, "Crab, crab, crab!" it let go its hold and darted away to the muddy bottom.

"Hurrah for them!" shouted Chuck. "Let's anchor further in shore and go for 'em. I've got a big chunk of liver in the basket."

A piece of liver as large as your hand, at the end of a string, is all the bait a crab calls for, and the tide was not now running strongly enough to require any other sinker. A landing-net that Chuck had borrowed of Mr. Bunner began to have its uses as soon as they were again anchored, and now Bob's position in that boat began to be uncomfortable. Sit where he would he found those uncanny-looking objects edging toward him, and wanted to move away. It was of no use to growl, and he seemed to feel that biting or "worrying" was not in order. Even when he wagged his tail once, a great blue crab against whom he wagged it nipped it fiercely, and only



SATURDAY ON THE HARLEM.

let go because his nippers slipped away over the hair.

"Never mind, Bob," said Chuck, when they got over that laugh; "we'll go ashore and have lunch before long. Then we can empty the basket and put the crabs in, and they won't bother you any more."

They could hardly have found a wilder-looking nook than they went ashore into, among the rocks and trees. It was a bit of wilderness, and yet it was in the middle of a great city. They were having the nicest kind of a picnic, and after lunch was eaten the crabs were counted into the basket.

"Twenty-seven," observed Chuck. "Now let's catch some more fish, somewhere."

Bob had been searching the woods for game or for signs of some other dog, and had not found either. He came down to the boat when he was whistled for, but his mind was full of crabs, and he refused to get on board.

"Hoist him in, Chuck," said Fin; but the hoist was followed by a whine that was almost a yelp. The boat was pushed from shore instantly, and Bob had no chance to get away. The sculpins had been thrown overboard, he knew, but where were those green, sideling, nipping monstrosities? He searched around for them under the seats, until Chuck lifted the cover of the basket and

let him look in. He was satisfied. So long as that basket was in one end of the boat he was willing to be in the other, with two boys and the distance between him and any crab.

The tide had reached high water mark while the fishing had been going on, and now it had all ebbed away again. Harlem River had turned, and had run the other way until all its flats were bare, and a great many of its boats and other craft were aground.

"Where are we to go, now?" asked Nelly. "Could we follow the river?"

"Yes; and call it Spuyten Duyvil Creek, away up yonder, and row out into the Hudson River, and go up to Albany; but I'd rather pull the other way."

"So'd I," said Fin. "There's good fishing out in the Kills, sometimes."

"What's that?" asked Nelly, for only a few of the present generation of young New-Yorkers are really Knickerbockers.

"The Kills?" said Chuck. "Why, that's between the islands. All the narrow places are Kills. It's Dutch; but I don't know whether we can get out there to-day or not."

It was real rowing, now; but two pairs of oars made it light work in such a boat as that. Bridge after bridge was passed, and there was no chance given Nelly to do anything but steer. The

water seemed to swarm with boats, coming and going, or at anchor, and Nelly all but ran into one in turning out for another. It was exciting work, but at last Third Avenue Bridge was reached, and beyond that was Mr. Bunner's float. Beyond that, also, were long wharves and steamers, and railway docks, and the "Kills", and the islands, and the East River and Long Island Sound. Beyond these, if you should go far enough, you could find the Atlantic Ocean and all the world, but Chuck Purdy had no notion of going so far into Geography and navigation that afternoon.

"See those piers?" he said to Nelly. "Steer between 'em. The new Elevated Railway Bridge is going to cross on them. There's no telling how far they go down under water."

Nelly had no difficulty in finding her way down the widening river, but a little below the piers of the new Elevated Railway Bridge she had to turn out for a "railway ferry-boat".

"Two trains of cars on it!" she exclaimed, "and it doesn't tip over."

It was a huge affair, but the boys had seen such things too often to have much curiosity about them; and right ahead, now, were Ward's Island and Randall's Island, dotted with hospitals and asylums.

"Water's awful deep along here," said Fin. "Biggest kind of steamers come right along in."

"See those boats? That's our ground. We won't go out to the Kills."

Deep as might be the Harlem in that neighborhood, there was a spot of at least two acres on which small boats with short anchor-ropes could take a rest. The people in them could fish, too, and Chuck counted forty-three persons, old and young, all holding hand-lines and leaning over the sides of their boats, except four small boys and one fat woman with "fish-poles". The water was pretty deep, but Mr. Bunner's anchor-rope was a long one, and it was only a minute before there were three more hand-lines in the water, each with a hook and a bit of sand-worm at the lower end of it.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Nelly, almost instantly. "It's pulling awfully!"

"Is it tide or a crab?" asked Fin, and Bob stood up and began to bark as if something were going wrong.

"Pull, Nelly!" shouted Chuck, and pull she did; but it was no sculpin this time.

Flop, flop, struggle—a great flutter all over Nelly, a great lift for a girl unused to that kind of sport—and then there was a porgy of at least a pound and a half for Bob to edge away from on the bottom of the boat.

"Hurrah, Nelly! Fin, have you got a bite? Hullo, so have I."

No more porgies, but a pair of decent flounders came in to testify to the fact that the tide was turning and fish were biting. There was fun all through the little fishing fleet, and a couple of trim sail-boats that darted hither and thither, in and out, down the channel and back again, did not seem to interfere in the least. Neither did they run over any small boats, and there was something remarkable in that to an unpractised eye.

"It's all in the steering, I guess," said Nelly; but just then she hooked a flounder and forgot everything else. Nelly's porgy was the head of the heap until Fin caught a black-fish a little larger, and Chuck's last flounder was as heavy, if he had been a more aristocratic fish. He looked bigger than he was, and Chuck remarked to him — "There's more good eating in one porgy than there is in two of you."

There was no place on the bottom of that boat where Bob could really feel at home, for there was no time to string fish, and they were coming in fast. Suddenly, however, the entire fishing fleet became quiet. Biting had ceased.

"Chuck," said Fin, "it's most supper time. Don't you feel tired?"

"Not if they'd bite; but I guess they won't any more. Let's go home. It's been a grand day."

So it had; but two boys and a girl went home

with just enough of energy left to carry their fish and crabs, and whistle for a discontented bull-dog.

Nobody heard the report of the day's proceedings with greater interest than did Philip Zimmerman, but Bob himself had not expressed a stronger aversion to crabs than was manifested by Mr. Gorrik. He was safe enough, so long as he only leaned over the basket, but he should not have poked an old "blue" with his finger. In one second more that crab was dangling in mid air, Bob was barking at him furiously, Chuck and Phil were shouting with fun and Mr. Purdy himself was remarking—

"Stand still, Mr. Gorrik; stand still. Let's see for once, how long a crab can hold on. I never knew."

Mr. Gorrik neither stood still nor kept still, and the crab lost his grip.

"They are detestable," said Mr. Gorrik, and Bob evidently agreed with him.

Supper came quickly after that, and then Mrs. Purdy's heart relented. It was Saturday evening, and she unlocked the cupboard which contained Chuck's wonderful Boy's Book. All other earthly things passed out of his mind the moment he was curled down in a corner, with that marvelous piece of literature open before him.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW CHUCK ASTONISHED HIMSELF.

EXAMINATIONS in the public schools of the city of New York are tremendous affairs to the teachers and pupils, but they are not amusing to outsiders. Each teacher is deeply anxious that every scholar under his or her care should make a good showing, and so bear testimony to fidelity and capacity in the instructor as well as in the pupil.

The time is one of hard, practical test and scrutiny, therefore, and Chuck Purdy in particular had never been able to make any fun whatever out of his examinations. They had always loomed up before him as a something dreadful that was sure to come, and the thought of which sometimes made him almost sick. As the end of the present school-term drew near, however, he did not feel quite so badly as usual, although he had very serious doubts of the result. It was true that his record of the whole term was not a matter to be

proud of, but he had been making some pretty good points lately. The kind of reviewing his mind was doing astonished him, at times, and he decided to just let it work along without interference on his part. His ambition was busy, also, and it was just as well that Chuck let them have their own way — his mind and his ambition. The examinations went off very well, one after another, and Chuck made Miss Thompson's eyes open pretty widely, several times. There was much less danger of his being "left back" now, but he did not feel by any means sure about it. It seemed to him that he had had a fit of knowing how to recite, and it had come at the right time, but it should have begun earlier in the term to make him perfectly safe.

At all events, he would know nothing about it until reception day, or afterward. That day itself had helped Chuck in his examinations, for the very thought of it and what he was to do in it made him reckless about other things, and he answered questions without trying to remember what the right answer was. So nothing kept the right answer from coming.

Even when in the boat on the Harlem, that Saturday, Chuck had more than once caught himself thinking of the oratorical trial before him. He woke up on Sunday and Monday and Tuesday mornings, glad, each time, that it was not Wed-

nesday. On that morning, when it came, it seemed to him that all his brains had taken a vacation, and that not enough of them remained to tell him whether the Ironsides was an old stove or a steam engine. He felt almost like playing hookey, and not going near the old school-house, but he knew it would be dreadfully cowardly to run away. Besides, he was beginning to be conscious of the new fact that he had a sort of ambition about his performance and that he was determined not to fail.

Nelly may have understood Chuck's feelings, but his mother did not, for she was too anxious about him, altogether, and told him he would forget the whole piece, while Nelly said she knew he wouldn't.

The general exercises were to begin at eleven o'clock, but all of the seven hundred and fifty scholars were to be on hand at nine. That was so that their teachers could get them well in hand for the grand parade march into the assembly-room. That was all the upper story of the Grammar School building, or nearly all, as soon as the sliding glass doors of the class-rooms around the middle room were slid back and the whole area was thrown into one big hall. There was one piano on the platform of the assembly-room and another on the floor, and Chuck found himself wishing, once, that both would play their loudest

while he was speaking. Then he hoped they wouldn't, and that none of the boys would wink at him.

One piano made noise enough while the scholars were marching in, and Chuck had never before seen all the available space in that room, outside of what belonged to the scholars, so crammed and jammed full of visitors. Mrs. Purdy herself was there, and so were ever so many people that Chuck knew, for their boys and girls were now marching in, as well as hers.

It was the grandest kind of a school reception; but Chuck went through all the marching and calisthenics and getting up and sitting down, like a kind of human machine. There was the platform, heaped with green things and flowers, and he had got to stand there, somewhere, pretty soon. One thing came after another. Music and singing marked a sort of fence, and then Fin Harris spoke a piece, and a tall, flaxen-haired young lady spoke another. After that came more music and singing, and as the sound of it died away, it seemed to Chuck as if the room were full of bees, all buzzing at once, and that his name came to him from the platform through the buzz. He knew that he had been called for, and he walked boldly forward, but for the life of him he could not guess what he might do or say after he

got there. He did not know that his mother was in a yet more painful state of doubt, and that Nelly was turning red and pale, alternately, while Miss Thompson was all over nervous about him.

Chuck made one bow at the spot where the principal was supposed to be, with some other teachers and some great people, and then he bowed again at all there might be in the rest of the room.

He was standing straight up, now. His face was twisting dreadfully, and he turned his head on one side and looked up at the ceiling. He knew that the first part of his duty was done, in making both bows, and now, as his eye fixed itself upon a stain in the plaster above him, an idea came pouring into his head. It was as if he were standing on the pier, away down by the East River, where he had admired the great three-masted ship so much, and had compared her to the Ironsides. He had spoken his piece at her once, mentally, and he could do it again now, right out aloud. He could see, in his imagination, the tall masts, with the tapering spars swung across them, and away up at the peak of the mainmast he could see a wide, fluttering American flag. His right eye was cornering curiously at that flag, but the words of the poem sprang to his lips and his right hand went up—

“Aye! Tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky.
Beneath it rang the battle shout
And burst the cannon’s roar —
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the seas no more.”

Chuck was as much astonished as was anybody else at the way that recitation began. The last lines of the stanza seemed to grow heavier and brought his eyes down to the floor. His face grew fiery red as he now pointed at a large knot a little in front of him and went on, in a much lower and more subdued tone —

“Her deck, once red with heroes’ blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o’er the flood
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor’s tread,
No more the vanquished knee —
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!”

Chuck had not the least idea how it was that he had done the best he could for that stanza. He had scowled at it, almost ferociously.

The situation was fast becoming nearly too much for him. He did not care one cent, now, whether he could recall the third stanza or not,

and so he looked straight at the whole school and said to them, in a sort of expostulating and protesting manner —

“Oh, better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep
And there should be her grave.”

Too many boys that he knew were in that school-room, and some of them were looking him out of countenance so fast that his eyes tried to get away from them, and hunted again for the weather-stain on the plaster overhead. The instant they found the right spot his hand went up and his tongue went into a half angry piece of denunciation —

“Nail to the mast her holy flag!
Set every threadbare sail
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!”

His hand came down and his head went forward in a very low bow, while his ears tingled, for he was listening to a great storm of prolonged applause. It was a terrible moment for Chuck Purdy.

Before he could leave the platform the applause was repeated, and Mrs. Purdy's face, behind her fan and her handkerchief and the back of the lady next in front of her, was hiding more red than had

ever been in it before. Nelly tried to look prim and failed very badly, while Miss Thompson's eyes were dancing in a sort of triumph, as if something she had laid a trap for had been caught successfully.

Chuck went back to his place in his class and the exercises went on to the end, but he had not altogether escaped, even then. Mr. Barmore, the principal, sent for him and not only shook hands with him, before a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, but told him he meant to call on him for another speech, one of these days. Miss Thompson had a severe fit of coughing, the next minute.

"No, Mr. Barmore," answered Chuck, a little hurriedly; "I won't say anything more about it this time, but I hope you'll never do it again."

"Not until after vacation, anyhow," said Mr. Barmore, with a sort of laugh gurgling under every other word, as if he were choking it down; and Chuck got away through the crowd.

"Oddest stick in the school," said Mr. Barmore. "What do you think of him, Miss Thompson?"

"I do not know precisely what to think. If he'd only wake up!

"That's it, is it?" said Mr. Barmore. "Well, he waked up on old Ironsides to-day."

The boys that knew Chuck, and that meant all the boys except one, who had just come, were in a sort of puzzle about him.

"Chuck," said Fin Harris, after they got out of doors, "did you get anybody to tell you how to do that?"

"No," said Chuck, slowly; "I didn't know I was going to do it."

"I'll bet you can't do it again," said Fin; "but I wish I knew how."

"So do I," said Chuck; and that was what he said to his mother and Nelly when he got home. They had reached it first, and their account of the matter had so upset Mr. Purdy that he had been giving over-weights to every customer that came in, for an hour and more. Mr. Gorrik and Philip Zimmerman knew nothing about it, and customers trading with them did no better than usual.

It was when Mr. Purdy came in to eat his supper that Mrs. Purdy said to him

"John, do you know — about Chuck — that boy is an awful puzzle to me. I can't begin to guess what's going to become of him.

"Of course you can't," said he; "nobody can. But he's all the while doing something or other that he wasn't looked for to do. He'll come out all right. I shouldn't wonder if we hadn't just better kind o' let him alone and not worry too much about him, anyhow."

"Perhaps we had," said Mrs. Purdy; but Chuck was her only son, and she could not help worrying about him, nevertheless.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CITY FOURTH OF JULY.

THE next thing in this world after the end of the school term and the beginning of vacation, is the Fourth of July. The fact that it was coming had helped Chuck, and some other boys that were down in the class about where he was, to wait more patiently till the results of the examination were announced. They were all to know just after the reception, and in the meantime they learned something else that was almost as bad as being "left back".

It takes a great deal to spoil "fire-cracker day" for a New York boy, but a very big man did his best to spoil it, that year. He did it according to law, and he did it for the public good. The mischief came as a sudden shock to all the younger part of the city's male population. It came in the shape of a proclamation by the Mayor, forbidding fire-crackers and threatening to enforce thoroughly the city ordinance against them.

Chuck heard the news on Monday, July 2nd, at about supper-time, and all that evening he read nothing in his Boy's Book but the things it had to tell about fire-works. He learned a great deal before he went to bed, and all of it made him feel more discontented.

The next morning his name was called among those who had passed their examinations and had been promoted, but it seemed as if the edge of that good news had somehow been taken off. Chuck would have let off ten packs of fire-crackers and fired a cannon for it, if this other disaster had not come.

Mr. Purdy felt differently and so did Mrs. Purdy, and Nelly was jubilant over her brother's promotion.

"I guess Ironsides helped," she said; but she was wrong about that. Teachers are not so blind as boys and girls are apt to imagine, and there is a great deal of substantial justice about promotions and that sort of thing.

The fact was that Chuck had expected that news to come, for he had previously felt as if something that belonged to being "left back" had gone away from him. The old notion that he was one of the kind of boys who can't succeed had melted off, although he was still well aware that he was uncommonly dull.

He had been making careful inquiries about the

Fourth of July business. He knew five policemen and every man of them told him, one after another, that they were ordered to arrest all offenders, old and young, and that all would be punished.

"Could you arrest a pack of fire-crackers after it got a-going?" asked Chuck, of the last "cop" he talked with.

"I guess they'd mostly go off while I was hunting the boy that fired 'em."

"Well," growled Chuck, "it's going to be the bluest kind of a Fourth."

He reported to Philip Zimmerman and to Fin Harris and to all the rest, and they agreed with him perfectly. All the boys of that ward and of all the other wards, away down to the Battery, continued to be in a troubled and seditious frame of mind from the hour in which the Mayor sent out his proclamation. They were prone to gather in groups, almost anywhere, and discuss the fire-works question. The Mayor was unanimously voted a tyrant, and at least fifty thousand boys declared, all over the city, that they did not believe any house was ever set on fire by a cracker or a rocket or a blue chaser or any other patriotic bit of good fun. It was all a humbug according to them, but it sent Chuck Purdy off in a new direction.

"Fin," said he, "there'll be more Fourth of

July away down town than there will be north of Harlem bridge."

"Reckon there will," said Fin.

"Soldiers and firemen and a big speech at the City Hall, and no end of things to see. Did you ever hear a big speech?" asked Chuck, soberly.

"Not very big. I was in court once and heard a man defended," said Fin.

"What had he done?" asked Chuck.

"He stole three bales of hay, and the lawyer defended him so well that the jury let him off on two bales and only sent him to jail for one of 'em."

"Let's put in the day down town, then. We can hear the speech-making at the City Hall, see the parade and have some ice-cream."

"Take Bob along, Chuck?"

"No, sir! I'd as lief have old Billy. You'd have to muzzle him and lead him and he'd be no end of trouble," said Chuck, with a grave shake of his head over what Bob might do in the city.

That was only the day before the Fourth, and both boys had to get permission. Fin obtained his without difficulty but Chuck's mother had her doubts, until he told her he "wanted to hear a big speech and know how it was done".

She had vastly more confidence in his mental capacity since the result of the examinations was reported and she was sure he had not been "left back".

"Why, mother," said he, "if I can hear one and know how it's done, I can do it myself. Anything's easy after you once know how."

"I wish you'd learn how to study," said she.

"I shouldn't wonder if I'd kind o' done that," responded Chuck, with a cornerwise look at the ceiling. "They stick to me better'n they did."

"Have you found out how to recite 'em?"

"Guess I have. I've been doing it, anyhow, right along. That's the way I came to get promoted and I'm going to keep it up. I couldn't do Ironsides over again, though. I want to hear that man speak his piece, down at the City Hall."

"You may go, Chuck."

The sun did not get up at twelve o'clock, midnight, to let in the Fourth of July, and the cannon of the forts in the harbor did not begin to bang away at their "national salutes" until actual sunrise. Nevertheless, hardly had the clocks begun to hammer out the fact that July "third" was dead, before the Mayor's proclamation was in difficulties. It was as if a great many thousand boys had determined, with one consent, that there should be at least five minutes of Fourth of July done. The police moved rapidly in the direction of every sound they heard, but it was a curious fact that they nowhere found a boy near any of the numerous packs of bursting fire crackers.

Double-headers and Chinese bombs went off

sonorously in the middle of wide streets, without a word to say as to who threw them out there. Anxious "cops" vainly studied the indications of long rows of open windows and not one arrest could be made. More noise was made, however, for hardly was the first unlawful racket over, before it seemed as if every tin horn in the city was at work, and against such patriotism as that there was no proclamation whatever. It was also a matter-of-course that all the dogs should bark, except a few who preferred to howl; and so the Fourth of July began tremendously. The drawback was that it could not be kept up as usual. It lasted less than an hour, and from that time until sunrise the people who were deaf had very little advantage over those who could hear plainly.

The first success was a midnight victory over the Mayor's proclamation, but it was only a small compensation to the disappointed boys of New York.

They could make a racket in many ways and they all did what they could. Still, they were compelled to stop at the fire-cracker limit, and such a privation had never before been experienced by any of them.

Chuck Purdy and Fin Harris had both been up at about twelve and both went to bed again, but they were on their way "down town" pretty soon

after breakfast, for the parade was understood to begin early.

"The regiments 'll be out, Chuck," said Fin. "I saw it in the paper."

"If we can only get a good place to see 'em. We must look sharp for that."

The Elevated Railway carried them down to the City Hall Park in less than an hour, but when they got there nothing was ready for them to look at but a double allowance of policemen. There were boys, however, in all directions, and every boy of them had a look on his face as if he were thinking of a pack of fire crackers that he had in his pocket, and wishing that he dared to touch it off.

Chuck and Fin took a good look around and then an idea came to Chuck.

"Fin," he exclaimed, "there's plenty of time for us to go clean across the Brooklyn bridge and back."

"And not miss any of the parade?" said Fin. "I'm ready. I never was on that bridge in my life."

"Let's go first and see what it stands on," said Chuck; and, in a few moments more they were wondering at the massive mason-work of brick and granite at the shore end of the great suspension bridge. They stared at arch after arch until they came to the dock and could get a good look

at the vast piers that carry the cables of twisted steel wire.

"They wove 'em a wire at a time," said Chuck, "and they're bigger 'round than your body is."

"They won't break," said Fin.

"No," said Chuck; but he was thinking, just then, of the high piers and of how deep below the bottom of the water the holes had been dug for their foundations.

"It took a good engineer to do that work, Fin," he observed. "Guess he was up in his arithmetic."

"Head of his class," said Fin. "Let's go up on top of the bridge."

It only cost them a cent apiece to do that, and they walked right along until they were in the middle. That was where Fin began to be astonished, for Chuck knew the names of every island and piece of water and point and channel and fort which they could see. There is no other place around New York from which quite so much can be taken in at one time, and Fin asked—

"Where did you learn so much geography? Was you ever up here before?"

"No," said Chuck; "but it isn't any kind of geography. It's only knowing about places and things and where they all are and what they're good for. The old fort on Governor's Island isn't good for anything. It's played out."

Fin asked some questions, and found that Chuck had somehow learned about all the other forts, and knew that the newspapers and army officers said that they, too, were almost good for nothing.

"Come on, Fin," said he, at last. "Let's get back and go up Broadway. We can buy a lot of peanuts and find a good place and stick to it till the procession comes along."

They found just the place they wanted. Somebody was putting up a new building on Broadway, not half a mile above the City Hall. In front of the new building was a pile of bricks with some lumber on top. It was almost as if the whole had been put together on purpose to make a good place to see a procession from. On any other day it was likely that all boys would promptly have been ordered off from that lumber, but this was not any other day.

"What are you up there for?" asked a very large policeman, of the tall "Broadway squad".

"Soldiers coming," said Chuck. "You can see 'em better if you'll come up here. Give you some peanuts."

"You can stay there. If he isn't the ugliest mug I've seen this morning! Bright little chap, though. Mayor spoilt his fun."

Human nature in uniform had a soft side for boys, but it was a good while before they had

much to do besides eating peanuts. Then a fire-engine came thundering past them with all steam up, on its way to some fire or other, and they both wondered whether any fellow's fire-crackers had set it a-going. Then three great wagons, full of banners and music and children, went by, on their way to some picnic, and after that there were five "target companies", targets and all, and each had more or less brass band along with it. After that, more boys and some men climbed up to keep them company on the lumber, and it was not so easy to keep their own places. The last peanuts had but just gone when Chuck suddenly exclaimed —

"Look up the street, Fin. Look!"

Fin was already looking and his mouth was open. A peanut fell from his fingers and a boy on the pavement below him got it. Away up, as far as they could see, was the head of a column of men, and in advance of it were squads of policemen, clearing the street, so that there should be no obstacle to a full military front. The roll of drums and an occasional crash of martial music could quickly be heard, and flags could be seen; then something began to glitter, and it was not long before the approaching bayonets seemed almost as thick as blades of grass. A great river of marching steel points filled the street from curbstone to curbstone, and there was breeze enough to make the flags flutter out.

"It's just great!" exclaimed Chuck. "It's almost as good as a war."

"There was never any war in this city," said Fin.

"Oh, yes, there was," replied Chuck, confidently; "but it was before you or I were born. The soldiers and policemen got almost whipped. There was days and days of fighting, right along here and all over, and the mob came pretty near burning the town. It was real shooting and lots of it."

"Wouldn't I have liked to have seen it, though!" exclaimed Fin.

"Guess not; I wouldn't. You can't dodge a bullet from one of those rifles, no how you can fix it."

"Bayonets hurt, too," said Fin.

"So do paving stones and clubs. It must have been awful hot work. See 'em come!"

It was worth seeing, as the well-drilled and handsomely-uniformed regiments came steadily sweeping on. They were interspersed with carriages that seemed to be a part of the procession, and when the first of these passed the pile of lumber, Chuck remarked of its load of passengers — "Don't you see, Fin, they're all generals. Real old war fellows. Stars on their shoulders."

"Guess they've all been wounded, too, some time or other," said Fin.

"That one's lost an arm."

"So's that one."

"Here's the Seventh," said Chuck. "More carriages behind them."

"More generals?" asked Fin.

A few minutes settled that question, and Fin was grumbling — "No uniforms. Every man of em's got two arms," when a big fellow on the lumber by him explained — "Gineral's? Thim, is it? Why, ye young greenhorns, thim's the alldhermin of the city. There's no hope of thim being kilt."

They were in that procession to be admired, and wore very well-satisfied faces, and they must therefore have been admired by somebody, as they came along, but Chuck and Fin and the other fellows on that pile of lumber were dreaming of war. Nothing short of an empty sleeve or a crutch or a uniform of some kind could have touched their feelings, and several carriage-loads of prominent citizens got past them without being so much as looked at.

"Chuck," said Fin, "let's get down and make for the City Hall or we sha'n't hear the speaking."

Down they clambered, but there was no use in trying to hurry in such crowds as packed the sidewalks.

The only fun they saw was a group of three policemen stamping on a heap of fire crackers.

Several packs had been lighted at once and put right down behind them to go off, and there was not a man or boy in that crowd who seemed to have the least idea who did it.

"Wonder who it was," said Fin.

"Didn't you see? 'Twasn't a boy at all. It was the fat man that's blowing 'em up for not enforcing the proclamation. I saw him put 'em down."

There was no danger that Chuck or Fin would play detective in such a case as that, and they let the tide of all kinds of people sweep them along. Every soul on the sidewalk was keeping step to the music, except a very lame man, and it looked as if he were trying and was half sick because he could not do it.

There was a great platform in front of the City Hall, and a brass band and a dozen arm-chairs full of great men were upon it. The Mayor and several of the great men, some in uniforms and some not, stood up in front while the grand procession marched by. The speaking was to be done to all the crowd that might stay to hear it, after the show was over, and the two boys worked their way deeply into the jam of men.

"It's the hottest place I was ever in," gasped Fin, when they at last got within half a dozen rows of the line of policemen that kept the crowd from spoiling the procession.

"Don't care if it is," said Chuck; "I'm going to hear that speech."

It was a long time before he had an opportunity, but pluck and perseverance were rewarded at last. The end of the procession went by in a perfect storm of music from the band on the platform, and then the Mayor bowed to the crowd and stepped back a little, just as a boy close to Chuck shook a very red head savagely and said —

"It's him that made the proclimashin, the spal-pene. I'd like to put some fire-crackers in his hat."

The Mayor was bowing now to a very large, important-looking man in black, who was coming out to the front of the platform.

"It's the speech," said Chuck.

"Niver a speech at all," said the unknown boy. "It's only the Declyrashin of Impidence; but they say it's a good wan."

The big man had a big voice, and in a moment more the Declaration of Independence was rolling out over the heads of that crowd, as if the reader imagined that old King George the Third of England was out there behind them and he wished him to hear every word of it. The last words of the tremendous proclamation by the American forefathers had hardly died away before the unknown boy turned a beaming face upon Chuck and Fin and remarked — "Thim was Irish, and

they've been foightin for yez iver since. It's the Queen hersilf that'll get blowed up one of these days."

It was not very clear what he meant, but the Declaration was a kind of "blowing up", and before any more could be said the Mayor was formally introducing another man to the crowd.

He must have been a great man, for he was greeted with a round of cheers, and yet nobody could say that the Mayor had told them his name, for the words of the introduction were as wheezy as a wet fire-cracker. He was not tall, he was very thin, and he gave the impression at once that he would say something dry and withered, that could not be heard more than a rod or so.

Chuck could hardly believe his ears, in about half a minute, for not only did a clear, resonant, piercing voice travel all the way across to the Post Office building, but it carried with it a breezy and unmistakable bit of out and out fun.

Did great orators ever joke—right out in public and before a crowd?

It looked like it, for now the crowd had to laugh again, and the next thing Chuck and Fin knew, they were listening with aïl their ears for what might come next. Twenty times within the next hour Chuck found himself wishing that he "knew more about all those old Revolutionary times", and determining that he would do so some

day. He almost forgot to watch "how the thing was done", but he was intensely conscious that the great orator was doing it.

"He knows how to speak his piece," he said to himself; "but how can he remember it all? May be he only talks out something that's in him."

That may have been the secret of it, but Chuck and Fin heard a great speech to the end and were satisfied. So was not the unknown boy, who had listened every bit as faithfully, for they heard him mutter, as they turned away with the dispersing crowd—"Niver wan word about owld Ireland, rest her sowl, and it bates me."

"Shall we go home to dinner, Chuck? I'm awful hungry."

"Not a bit of it. We'll go somewhere and eat something and then let's look around and see things."

It was easy to find a restaurant and get enough to eat, but when they came out and Chuck led Fin on down town the wonder they saw was not the wonder they went to see. The great buildings were there, and they looked more grand and vast than ever, and the two boys wandered from street to street, gazing at them, but somehow it seemed as if the "city" were gone. All was shut up, silent, desolate; for all the busy multitudes were keeping holiday and the places they worked in were having a rest. The blazing July sun

shone almost painfully upon granite and marble fronts and plate-glass windows and iron shutters and nearly noiseless pavements. Even the people who actually lived and ate and slept thereabouts must have gone off on excursions somewhere. Chuck said so several times, and when at last Fin urged him — “Oh, come on, let’s go home,” he replied — “I don’t care to see any more. It’s been the biggest Fourth of July I ever had in all my life.”

“I’ve seen more soldiers, and heard more music, and more speaking, and I’ve eaten more peanuts,” said Fin; but he stopped short there, and they turned at once toward home.

CHAPTER XVII.

RIGHT INTO VACATION.

BILLY the goat did not have any Fourth of July, so far as he knew, but he had a kind of celebration. He went out and marched his rounds very much as usual, with his eyes about him. He found the ward in very good order and uncommonly quiet, but he came to one garden gate that was wide open. All the people of that residence had gone away somewhere, to have a good time, and had been careless about their gate. Billy was careless about it, too, and walked right in and had a very good time. When he had tried all the different kinds of vegetables and had seen all he wished to see, he came out and left the gate open behind him, just as he had found it. Several other goats had good times in that garden before the day was over.

As for Bob, he obeyed the Mayor's proclamation, but perhaps it was just as well for him that the city ordinance about fireworks was broken,

once. He took a holiday excursion, all on his own account. Early in the forenoon of the day, Mr. Gorrik was leaning over the cellar stairway, in serious doubt as to whether or not he ought to go down and bring up something. He had left the front door open, and he did not know the precise moment when a long cord with a bull-dog at the outer end of it flashed through that exit and darted up the street. A dog who had once wandered into difficulties ought to have been wiser, but it was Fourth of July, and Bob's wisdom, like that of many other people, had left him for the day. He investigated quite a number of streets and found them all about half-way quiet. They were not altogether peaceable, for every now and then a crash or a bang or a rattle indicated that skirmishing of some sort was going forward. No doubt the police were vigilant, but they neglected Bob and paid no attention whatever to another dog who was coming down one of the very streets he had selected for his excursion. This other dog was very like Bob, but had a decidedly English look. He was a John Bull-dog and was probably an invader from the other side of the Atlantic. Bob was intensely American, and in another moment the old story of the Continentals and the Regulars began. There is no telling what might have been the consequences if the two dogs had been let alone. As it was, their

grapple ended in a drawn battle, like most of those fought in the war of the Revolution. It was a matter-of-course that all the boys and men who were doing nothing within two or three blocks, gathered rapidly around Bob and the Englishman. It was also a matter-of-course that no less than three of those boys had forbidden packs of fire-crackers in their pockets. The four-footed champions were not really hurting each other much, but each had taken a good grip and was determined not to let go before Christmas or New Year's. Just as a policeman came up, at the outskirts of the little crowd, he heard the beginning of a most unlawful rattle.

Each boy had seen that he would probably have no better chance, that day, to express his opinion of the Mayor. Each had cautiously lighted his pack of fire-crackers with the piece of punk he had been vainly toting around since breakfast time.

Each had dropped his protest against the Mayor as near as might be to the heads of Bob and the Englishman.

The policeman shouldered his way through the crowd, and by the time he reached the middle of it the three boys were out on the edges, listening to the racket. They felt entirely safe about anybody in the Twenty-fourth ward knowing, or at least telling, who lighted those crackers.

Bob and the John Bull-dog held on, for a moment, as if each were encouraging the other not to let go and spoil so good a fight, but it was of no use. All around them, under them, over them, between them, it was whole platoons of musketry and a clatter of Chinese war; not to speak of the smoke and the smell. There is a great deal of Bunker Hill music in three packs going off together. The Englishman got a bursting cracker on his left ear, just as Bob got an idea that he and the other fellow had been turned into fire-works and were exploding. Both let go at the same moment with but one thought between them—they wanted to get away from so much Fourth of July.

They ran in different directions, but nobody pursued the John Bull-dog.

It was Bob who was followed.

Just as he let go and started down the street, one man in the crowd gave a sudden shout and tried to catch hold of the cord which still dragged from the collar-ring. He missed his first catch and tried again and again, but he was a fat man, and he was compelled to give up the race at the end of one long block. Bob had had a good look at that man's face, and there was something in it which spoiled the rest of his excursion. That is, the fire-crackers begun it and the man finished the spoiling by trying to capture him.

Not a great while afterward, Mr. Gorrik heard a loud bark in front of the grocery door and went at once to see what it meant.

"How did you get out?" was the question he asked; but Bob dashed past him, went clean through into the back yard and lay down. He looked all around, to make sure that there were no fire-crackers near, so that he could pant in peace, and Dick crowed tremendously.

The Continental Army had fought well and had gotten away, and so had the British foe, and neither of them knew exactly what sort of victory it had been. The greatest generals of modern times have done the same thing, often. Perhaps the only victory gained was won by the three boys. As for the policeman, he only questioned one man.

"Who lit them?" he asked, sternly.

"Sure an it was thim dogs that did it. That kind's niver to be thrusted wid fire-works."

"Some of these rascally boys!"

"Och, ye'd not be charging it on the pore b'ys? Me own noshin is that wan of the dogs loighted the crackers and the other was a cop and thried to arrest him."

"There was always too much tongue in Tipperary," responded the policeman, with a brogue which told where he came from, and he walked away without any further attempt to solve the

problem, just as one last, lonely, slow-burning cracker went off like an exclamation of disgust with the entire proceedings.

Napoleon was not supposed to have any patriotism, but he was not compelled to remain all day in the stable. Mr. Purdy borrowed a two-seated carryall, and in the afternoon he and Nap took Mrs. Purdy and Nelly and Mr. Gorrik out for a drive on the Boulevard. It lasted until supper-time, and Nap was passed by more fast horses than he had ever heard of before in all his life. Once or twice he started off as if he had a notion of not letting all of them go by him, but he was promptly reined in, each time.

"No, you won't, Nap," said Mr. Purdy; "there's go in you, or I'm mistaken; but you've got too much weight behind you."

"If you mean me," said Mrs. Purdy, "I'd just like to see him trot."

"Four in a carryall won't do to run a race," said Mr. Purdy. "If I had him in a sulky, now!"

"He stepped right off," said Mr. Gorrik.

"He looked real pretty, too," remarked Nelly; but Nap was not permitted to show whether or not there was any speed in him.

Philip Zimmerman spent his Fourth of July with his own family, but he was on hand as usual, bright and early the next morning. The fifth is always a dull day for business, and he and Chuck

had plenty of spare time to exchange accounts of their holiday experiences. All of Chuck's time was on his hands, for he and the other boys whom he knew were not yet by any means adjusted to vacation. You can't jump out of school, right through Fourth of July, into being a boy with nothing to do.

Chuck began by helping pile things around and dust them, in the grocery, while Phil told what a time he and his friends had had on an excursion steamer which took them to Coney Island. There had been music and dancing on board, and Chuck almost wished he had been there.

"Were they all Germans?" he asked.

"No," said Phil; "but I thought I'd find out just how many languages I'd have to know to speak with all of them."

"How many did you get?" asked Chuck, with increasing interest.

"The steamer only had about fifteen hundred people on board," said Phil. "There were all kinds of Germans and I could hardly understand some of them. Then there were Hollanders, Poles, Hungarians, Bohemians, French, Spanish, Italians, Danes, Russians, Jews of all sorts, and a lot of fellows I couldn't exactly place. Tell me some more about what you did."

Chuck went right along in a way that made Phil feel as if he had been beaten a little. Phil

had to go and come now and then, but Chuck settled himself on a pile of soap-boxes, with Bob beside him. Mr. Purdy was at the desk, looking over his account books, and Mr. Gorrik stood in a very good attitude behind the counter.

The whole grocery had an air of being ready for some customers who had not come yet, when a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a tremendous brown beard, walked slowly in from the street. He stared around as if in search of somebody or for something. Mr. Gorrik at once straightened himself, and his mouth opened half an inch or so. If the stranger should make any sort of inquiry the answer was all ready — “Yes, sir, we’ve got the very thing to suit you.”

No question came at once, but a sort of answer did. Chuck had one arm around Bob when the tall man entered the grocery and was suddenly aware of a great wriggle under that arm. Then followed a whine, a yelp, a bark and a spring to the floor.

“Ben!” exclaimed the stranger, very loudly. “Come here, Ben!”

There was another yelp, but Bob was dashing all around the grocery floor as if he were searching for something. In a moment more, he was standing in front of the man, with both a stick and a whine in his mouth and a continuous wriggle all over him.

"If Bob should wag his tail any faster than that," thought Chuck, "you couldn't see it."

"Ben, old fellow," exclaimed the man, in a tone of extraordinary exultation, "I've found you, have I?"

"Woof! Woof!" replied Bob, and the man turned to Mr. Gorrik and said quite sharply—"Mister, this here dog belongs to me. How did you happen to get hold of him?"

Mr. Gorrik had no answer ready for that question. It did not in any manner relate to the grocery business, and it took him too much by surprise. Chuck had jumped down from the pile of soap boxes and was at this moment just behind Bob, with his hands out as if he had an idea of picking him up and making for the back yard with him.

"Your dog? Bob your dog?" he exclaimed, half defiantly.

"Yes, sirree!" said the stranger. "He's my dog. Where did you find him?"

"Find him?" returned Chuck, with a rush of blood to his face; "I found him in the street, getting all chawed up by another dog that had four men to help him. I don't know whether he's your dog or not."

"Well, now," said the stranger, "can't you see? Doesn't he know me?"

"He kind o' seems to," admitted Chuck.

"Sit up, Ben," said his claimant. "Give paw. That's a good dog. I raised him from a pup. He'll follow me right away from you, any day."

"It looks like it. Guess it must be so," almost groaned Chuck, and his face was twisting uncommonly, for Bob's every movement testified to his good opinion of the stranger.

"My name's Harris," said the man; "and my farm's up east of Tuckahoe. I lost that there dog one day when I was in the city with potatoes. He got to ranging around and I missed him. One of my neighbors got sight of him in the street, Fourth of July, and he tracked him to somewhere hereabouts. I came in as soon as I could, and I've been inquiring into every place on this side of the avenue for a quarter of a mile. Tell ye what, now, I'm glad to find him, and the folks at home'll be right down glad to see him come back."

"There isn't any doubt but what he's your dog," said Mr. Purdy, from the desk. "I suppose you'll have to take him, but he and Chuck are great friends and he'll be sorry to lose him."

"Well, now," said Mr. Harris, in a much mollified tone and manner; "I reckon that must be so. Look here, my son, tell me all about it."

Chuck could not begin with the story of Bob's first city cat and the night under the wagon, but he told all he knew, from the affair at the livery

stable to the present date. Before he was half through, Bob had brought him three sticks and a wisp of paper, in token of undiminished personal friendship, while Mr. Harris listened and now and then remarked — “Just like him!”

He explained his own position in the matter quite forcibly. He owned a farm of a hundred and fifty acres and had no other dog but Ben. He had not even a boy or girl to make any disturbance around the house. Only himself and his wife and his wife’s two sisters.

“Tell you what,” said Mr. Purdy, at last, “you finish all the errands you’ve got on hand, and come back here and take dinner with us, and then you can take your dog home.”

“I’ll do it,” said Mr. Harris, emphatically. “What’s more, I’d as lief buy my groceries right here of you, as of anybody else. There’s just a few trips to make outside, and to get my team. I can get home before dark, if I start pretty soon after dinner. Smartest kind of team!”

Both of Chuck’s hands were in his pockets and he was looking down mournfully at Bob, when all at once the farmer turned upon him.

“There, young man,” he said, “I know what Jerusha would say. You’ve been kind to my dog, and it’s just the same as being kind to me. I’ve got him again. She’d say that was so. Why can’t you get into the wagon and go home with me for

a visit? We'll show you the country. Ben'll take you all over the farm. Knows every stick and stone there is on it. Come along. New milk, honey, berries, good fishing in the lake, eggs—give ye full swing to pay for taking care of Bob."

"You may go, Chuck," said Mr. Purdy, to help him with his answer; but Chuck had a long-drawn breath to let out before he could say anything.

"Thank you, very much," he said, with one eye on Bob. "I'd like to go. I was never in the country in all my life."

"We'll show you some, then," said Mr. Harris. "You tie up Ben and keep him here while I'm out. It won't do to lose him again."

"Dinner at half-past twelve," said Mr. Purdy, as the farmer turned to go out.

"Bob! Bob! Come here!" shouted Chuck; but he had to say Ben and then to get him by the collar and hold hard to keep him from following the man who had brought him up from a pup. There could be no manner of doubt as to whose bull-dog he was, or of his strong desire to return to his own farm.

Chuck led him out into the yard and tied him, and then stood still and looked at him. So did Dick and three hens.

"Bob," said Chuck, "that's what comes of your Fourth of July." And it was plain that he had only just enough honesty to keep him from

feeling bitter, not so much against Mr. Harris as against that other farmer who had reported the whereabouts of the lost dog. Of one thing he was sure—he had never admired Bob half so much as he did after he began to try and call him Ben. The new name sounded strangely to him and to everybody else about the grocery, and Nelly flatly refused to say it. So did Dick and Napoleon; but it was the dog's right name, nevertheless, and he responded to it without hesitation. It is not easy to knock over a fact, and Chuck found his state of mind improving when he went up-stairs and got out his Sunday clothes and began to pack a satchel full of things to take with him into the country. His mother came to help him, and she expressed a vast deal of anxiety as to the impression he might make upon Mrs. Harris and her two sisters.

"Chuck," she said, "be especially careful how you behave at the table, and by all means don't eat too much. All country people have an idea that city people don't get enough to eat at home."

Chuck promised, but at that very moment he was feeling hungry and wishing it were dinner-time. It must have been about so with Mr. Harris himself, to judge by what he did when he came to the table. He was too busy to say much at first, but just when he was passing his plate to

be helped the second time, he expressed his mind upon a matter which had embarrassed him.

"Mrs. Purdy," said he, "I never before heard of such a name as Chuck, in all my life. Was he named after one of his uncles?"

"No," said Mrs. Purdy; "that isn't it. He was named John, after his father, and we began to call him Jack before he could talk. He tried to speak his own name and made Chuck of it, and it's never been changed since."

"It doesn't need to be," said Chuck; "Bob's got to lose his name, but I won't lose mine no how you can fix it."

"Chuck'll do first-rate for up country," said Mr. Harris; "and we'll try and keep you chuck full all the while you are there."

Before dinner was over, Nelly Purdy felt as if she were almost acquainted with the women of the Harris family. She had actually been invited to come and see them, at some uncertain future day.

Mr. Harris evidently considered that he was acquainted with the Purdy family. He talked a little loudly and emphatically, but it was impossible not to like him, except for the fact that he was the owner of Bob, whose true name was Ben. After he had eaten a very hearty dinner, he went out and bought a liberal supply of groceries and paid for them. He put them into a spruce-look-

ing wagon, drawn by a span of bays, either of which was apparently worth at least three of Napoleon on any horse-market.

Nelly admired the bays, and said so, but Chuck went back to the stable to take another look at Nap.

"He isn't a badly-made horse," said he to Dick, who was picking at a piece of straw on the ground near them. "Good-by, Nap; you're a right good fellow. There's an apple for you and some sugar."

Napoleon whinnied his approbation, and there was no doubt but what he was a good horse, with some drawbacks as to getting him into or out of the stables of his possible owners.

By the time Chuck was in front of the house again, Mr. Harris was ready to go. He had evidently taken a fancy to Chuck; but Ben seemed to feel called upon to apologize to both of them for his conduct in having two masters. He knew the bay horses, and they seemed to know him and to say as much, in a way that he understood, when he jumped up in a friendly effort to bark in their faces. He also went and barked his best bark at Mr. Purdy and Mrs. Purdy and Mr. Gorrik, and brought an old shoe from the gutter and gave it to Nelly. It was as if he were doing what he could to say —

"Good-by, all of you. I'm going back to my

own farm and family, but I've enjoyed my city visit very much. Give my love to all the customers and tell them they won't see me again."

His master lifted him into the wagon, and after dancing all around in it, he put his paws on the front-board and barked vigorously at the bays.

Just how long Chuck was to stay in the country was left a little uncertain, but the family said good-by to him as if he were going on a long journey. They also said nice things to Bob, whose name was Ben, and Mr. Gorrik even brought him out a bone, to gnaw in the wagon on the way.

Chuck had no bone, but he felt as if he wanted to gnaw something, for a great hunger of mind was growing within him. He had always had an appetite for the country and had never seen any more than just the edges of it, where they came crowding up against the edges of the great city. So soon as they did that he knew they were more or less spoiled by it, for the city overflows in every direction. Chuck said it "slopped over".

"Well," said Mr. Harris, as they drove on up Third Avenue, "I've got my dog back. I shouldn't wonder if I could get you a pup of the same breed and you can raise him yourself. He'll be your own dog, then. They're all good ones."

"Ben" must have heard that, for he at once began to bark furiously at an express wagon which seemed to be trying to pass them.

"They can't do it," said Mr. Harris, with a sharp chirrup to his bays. "Not many teams on this road can, if I let 'em out to their gait."

Chuck did not know much about horses, but he said something of the fast teams on the boulevard, only to be told — "Well, yes; and they all came from some farm or other. I'll show ye a colt when we get there."

"There's Billy!" suddenly exclaimed Chuck. "Smartest goat this side of Harlem River."

"There's more goats, all over around here," said Mr. Harris, emphatically, "than I can guess what they ever do with them all. Did you ever hear of anybody eating one?"

"Guess not," answered Chuck, thoughtfully; "but a goat'll eat anything there is except an old tomato can."

"Ba-a-a! Beh!" came faintly to his ears on the wind from behind them, for Billy was at that moment starting on a run, with a woman and a boy and two dogs and a volley of stones behind him. He even dropped a bunch of something he had stolen, but he ran well.

"See the forks of the road there?" asked Mr. Harris, a little later. "The left hand road goes to Albany and the right hand road goes to Bos-

ton, and all beyond here was fought over during the war of the Revolution."

"I know," said Chuck. "Cow-boys and Skinners" —

"And Whigs and Tories and General Washington and Benedict Arnold, and all the rest. My grandfather was killed in the battle up at White Plains."

Chuck had something to be proud of now, for he could answer — "My folks came from Massachusetts, and some of 'em were at Lexington, and father was a soldier in the war and was wounded three times."

"You don't say? I got clean through without ever being hit; but one Reb colonel spent the best part of last summer with me."

"What for?" asked Chuck.

"Oh, he did the best he could for me when I was a prisoner, and if I didn't give him a good time last summer you may take my hat."

They took "the Boston Road" at the parting of those two old highways, but it was a long drive before they were beyond the city limits. As Mr. Harris remarked —

"Tell ye what, Chuck, when the city fills up all these vacant lots and old farms with houses — and it'll do it sure, some day — Harlem Bridge'll be away down town to folks up here. It'll be the biggest city in the world then — and you'll

live to see it if you keep your health and stay where you are."

"I'd rather be in the country," said Chuck; and before long it began to grow upon him that he was getting there. Either the road or the Bronx river crooked a great deal, for they seemed to cross that stream every now and then, or to see some pond it ran into, and there were ice-houses and factories and villages, and Mr. Harris seemed to know the history of every old house they came to.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOING INTO A NEW WORLD.

THE span of bays and the spring-wagon, with its passengers, were hardly out of sight before it came tremendously to Nelly Purdy that there had been a change of some kind. Bob was gone forever, and Chuck was gone for nobody knew how long, and the family circle would be smaller; but that could not be the whole of it. Such a thing had never occurred before, it was true, but if that were all, there was no need of feeling lonely and blue over it. The grocery was fairly swarming with customers and her father and Mr. Gorrik and Philip Zimmerman were as busy as bees. Everything had a prosperous appearance, but Nelly did not feel at all prosperous. She expressed to herself a strong wish that she were going with Chuck into the country. Then she hoped he would have a good time and get back safe and sound. Then she took a long look up and down the avenue and

went back through the grocery and up-stairs to the sitting-room.

It was while going up the stairs that she said to herself — “I almost wish vacation were over now, and school had begun again.”

That was the bluest kind of wish for a girl of fifteen to wish, in such very warm weather, but the moment she entered the room where Mrs. Purdy sat, fanning herself, she exclaimed —

“Well, mother, it’s only one year more at the Grammar School, and then I shall graduate.”

“That’s all, Nelly,” said Mrs. Purdy; “and it’s dreadfully warm. I hope Chuck’ll remember all I said to him, and not be any trouble, and not eat too much.”

“Chuck can take care of himself,” said Nelly. “Boys have all the chances. There isn’t much for a girl, anyhow.”

“Oh, yes, there is. I was a girl once, and I didn’t have any such schools to go to, and your father didn’t, either.”

Mrs. Purdy fanned herself rapidly and gazed out of the window as if her eyes were following Chuck.

“I don’t care, mother,” said Nelly, dolefully. “What’s the good of it?”

“Ever so much. Ever so much,” said Mrs. Purdy, vehemently; “but what Chuck’s going to do with himself nobody can tell.”

That set Nelly's tongue loose, and Mrs. Purdy had to hear all that Mr. Cramer had said about the brilliant young lady whose salary was so large, and about the rich washer-woman and the pickle-lady, and several other financially successful women, young and old.

"You couldn't do anything worth while with pickles, Nelly," she said; "but you haven't got to begin at anything, right away."

"It isn't worth while to study so hard," said Nelly. "If I should pass ever so high an examination, father couldn't afford to let me go to the Normal College."

"Nelly!" almost exploded Mrs. Purdy. "If you'll get through and pass you shall go, if I have to live four years on gruel!"

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Nelly. "Then, after that, I could study for almost anything. I'd study!"

"Besides," said Mrs. Purdy, as if her breath were growing shorter, with pride and excitement, "we're not so poor as we were. Your father says that if trade keeps up he can begin to build on his vacant lots, next year. They're worth four times what he paid for 'em, and he'd sell one of 'em rather'n not let you take any chance that belonged to you."

Nelly was crying. At the Cramer strawberry party, for the first time in her life, she had fully

understood how deeply she had felt the terrible fact that she and her family were poor. All roads leading upward had seemed to be closed to her by the gate at the end of the Grammar School course. Mr. Cramer's talk had left her in a confused condition of mind, and now, when Chuck rode away, it had seemed as if the boys had all the chances and could climb, while the girls had none and must stay at the bottom of the hill, where they were. Only a moderate number of scholars out of any class usually stand high enough to compete for entrance to the Normal College. She felt sure she could be one of that few in her own class, but, as she had said, what was the use? The other expenses would be very small, but who was to furnish even them and board her and clothe her during four long years?

"What are you crying for, Nelly?" asked Mrs. Purdy, as she actually arose and came across the room and fanned her, as if that might be a consolation.

"I didn't know father owned any vacant lots, and I didn't know he cared whether I learned much or little."

The secret of quite a number of family economies came out, in reply to that, and Nelly wanted to go down into the grocery and hug her father.

As she could not do that, while he was so busy, she hugged her mother instead, and all the while

her ambition grew within her, and it became less and less likely that Julia Cramer or any other girl would be above her during the next year at the Grammar School. Then they sat and talked about Chuck and about what he could do and couldn't do, and wound up by saying that he would feel decidedly more at home in the Harris family because of being already so well acquainted with Bob.

During all that time and much more, Mr. Harris drove his bay team on northward at a swinging trot, and he seemed to enjoy it immensely. Chuck Purdy was conscious of an idea that he was trotting briskly out into a new world, and that it was too wide for him. He felt small and then he felt as if he were at sea. He had seen all sorts of houses before, and fields and trees and every kind of thing he now saw, hundreds of times, more or less. Now, however, the very smell of the air was changed to him and the trees had new styles of their own for leaning this way and that way. They were all country trees and all the houses were country-houses, and Chuck was riding right in among them and past them, on his way to a regular-built, out and out farm.

So was Ben, for that matter; and he also knew it, and felt that his visit in the city had been a very long one. True, he had learned much and he had made good friends and he had about

chased the rats out of one stable. He could not know that at that hour there were five cats purring unmolested in Mr. Purdy's back yard, and that Mr. Gorrik and Phil Zimmerman were talking about him in the grocery-wagon, but he did know that he was on his way to his own place in the country.

Mr. Harris had nearly all the talking to himself during the latter part of that drive, and it suited him exactly to have it. Chuck had the seeing to do, and all the feeling queer over his new experience.

"That's my house," said the burly farmer, at last. "The way back part was built first, before the Revolution, and it's been kept patched up ever since. All the rest has been added on, a piece at a time."

It looked like it; but there had been plenty of land to build on and the house had grown well. Only the very newest part of it was of two stories, and a whole block of city buildings could have been landed in the front yard. There were fruit trees there now, and any number of bushes, and three cows were looking over the fence from the orchard. So were some of the older apple trees. Away behind the house were barns and stables that also had a look of having been put there one at a time, for the older ones had moss on their heads and were getting gray.

Chuck held his breath as they pulled up at the wide gate of the lane leading back to the barns, but Ben did not hold in anything. The torrent of barking he hurled at the house brought three women out of it, just as Chuck sprang down to open the gate. Ben jumped after him and squeezed through a hole he knew in the yard fence, and went pell mell after those women. They also went forward for him, and it was easy to see that he was all the dog they had. They had evidently forgiven him everything and were ready to hug him thoroughly. He kissed every one of them and then broke away and began to bring them sticks as fast as he could find any.

"I'll put the team up first, Jerusha," shouted Mr. Harris. "Ben and I have brought ye a visitor, and we're both hollow hungry."

Chuck could have spoken for himself on that point, but he did not, for his wonder at the house and at all those barns. It was nearly sunset and a man was letting some cows into the barn-yard. Chuck saw some tin pails and a stool and it flashed upon him that those cows were about to be milked, but his main thought at that moment centered upon a vast stack of hay at the right of the reddest barn. In a minute more the horses were loosed from the wagon and Mr. Harris said to the man — "Jim, don't give 'em any water till they're cooled off a little. I'm going in to supper."

Chuck had seen a great deal of that barn-yard, just in getting into it, and he knew that the horses would be watered from a long tank made of very old looking planks, into which a steady stream was pouring from a leaden pipe at one end.

"Must come from a spring up the hill, somewhere," he said to himself, and it made him think of High Bridge and the aqueduct.

Then there came the severest kind of a trial, for Mr. Harris led him into the kitchen and introduced him to his wife and her sisters. He recovered from his first feeling of being hot all over, very easily, for they were as hearty and kindly as Mr. Harris himself, but there was a difficulty left.

"I know that Jerusha is Mrs. Harris," said Chuck, "and I can call her so; but I daren't say Polly or Lib to one of those other women. I've got to find out their other names. Would it do for me to ask 'em?"

He felt more at home the moment they were all seated at the table, for the very look of it was full of hospitality. Cold chicken, fried eggs, jelly, coffee, preserves, biscuits, cake, fresh radishes and cucumbers and young onions and a great brown pitcher of milk, besides bread and butter. Mrs. Jerusha Harris was a woman proud of her table, and Chuck's first idea that there was too much upon it faded away down to a shadow

before he and the family reached the cake. Ben, who had lost the name of Bob, sat down by each in turn and looked happy, but it also looked as if he considered Chuck in some way under his protection, or at least entitled to special politeness.

Mrs. Harris felt exactly the same, and Chuck responded vigorously to all her efforts at making him eat. What he could not do very well at first was to answer all the questions she and her sisters asked him about matters and things in the city, but his tongue grew looser as he went on, and at last he told all about his Fourth of July.

The story of Bob's adventures in the city was fully related by Mr. Harris and Chuck together.

When supper was over and as they arose from the table, Ben made a frantic rush for the back door, as a dog who had business on his paws.

"Come on, Chuck," said Mr. Harris. "Come with Jim and me and look at the stock. You can talk with the women folks afterward."

Chuck put on his hat instantly, for he felt that wonders were before him. Out they went, through the great, sprawling yard. There were heaps of queer old rubbish here and there and in the corners, and a used-up sleigh leaned against the smoke-house. They walked on into the farmyard, and the idea occurred to Chuck that if he should stay long enough among those barns it would make a farmer of him. The idea grew

stronger as he stared at the sleepy-looking cattle all around him. It was almost a conviction when he found himself carrying a real pail of actual swill to some genuine, live pigs. Every one of them squealed at him as if they knew him, and expected him. What they recognized so promptly was the pail and not Chuck, but it was all the same. Ben and Mr. Harris led him right into the largest barn, but it was getting too dark to see much that was inside. It was only a great gloom with a shell on it, and it seemed to expand and become immense as he tried to look around. He chuckled aloud when he was told — "You can come out here in the morning and hunt for eggs. The hens lay everywhere they can find a good hiding place."

Ben was anywhere, everywhere and all over, and it was of no use to call him back from his round of inspection. It looked as if he confidently expected that the cows and horses and possibly even the barn-rats would be glad to know that he was back again, but all the hens were already perched or settled for the night.

There was not to be any talking in the house that evening. Hardly had Chuck re-entered it before Mrs. Harris said to him — "Now, then, I suppose you want to go to bed. I'll show you your room. You needn't get up in the morning when we do, unless you want to."

"Yes, he will," said Mr. Harris. "He must dig some worms while Jim and I are milking, and I promised to take him over to the lake."

"If he knows how to fish he can catch plenty there," remarked Polly, but Lib sniffed a little and asked him — "How many fish did you ever catch in the city?"

"Harlem River is right in the city. I've caught strings of 'em there. Eels, too, and crabs."

"You don't say! Well, if you can bait a hook" — said Elizabeth.

"Give him a chance to-morrow," said Mr. Harris. "Go on, Chuck. I'm up at day-light."

That was what made it bed-time now, and Chuck was up-stairs pretty quickly, in the nicest kind of a room. Mrs. Harris handed him the candle as she said "good-night" to him, and he saw at once that there were no gas fixtures.

"No Croton, either, and no carpet, except in the middle of the floor," he said, but he was quickly absorbed in the study of a very rusty old gun that hung upon wooden hooks over the mantel-piece. He wanted to take it down and examine it, but he restrained himself.

"It's as long as I am," said he, "and I don't know but what it's longer. Looks as if it had been in the Revolutionary war. Got a flint-lock, but there isn't any bayonet. It's an awful old

house and I'd kind o' like to know about all the folks that ever lived in it."

He tried to imagine something about them while he was undressing, but he could not see the gun after he had blown out the candle and got into bed. He was a tired boy, and it was of no use for him to think of anything more. Sleep took the most complete and sound possession of him in five minutes.

CHAPTER XIX.

DISCOVERING THE COUNTRY.

FOR a great many hard-working people the hours of each day's toil are measured off by the clock and do not vary much, but it is not so with farmers. Their days contract and shorten with the cold of winter and expand with the heat of summer. There is more day in the country at the time of year when there is the most work to do, and the farmers get up and use it all, except, sometimes, a little patch in the middle of the day, when it is too hot for anything. The animals that live with them seem to have formed the same habit, even to the blackbirds.

By going to bed so early, Chuck Purdy got the benefit of all there was of his first, short, summer night at the Harris farm. He did not dream a dream, so far as he knew, and it seemed to him that just after he went to bed he was aware of a shrill crowing. He had slept so soundly that he

did not know what the clock had been doing. The crow came from the barn-yard, as if to put him in mind of where he was, and he sprang out of bed.

"Is it morning?" he exclaimed. "It's kind of dark, yet. What does that rooster mean? The sun isn't up."

He was not out of his fog yet, nor was Chuck, either. All the fowls knew what they were about, however, and crow answered crow while Chuck was staring out of the window upon his first morning in the country.

There did not seem to be any use in getting up so early, but he could not have gone to bed again if he had been paid money for doing it. The window opened toward the barns, and beyond them the morning-star was just dying out. There was light enough to dress by, and while Chuck was putting on his clothes he took another long stare at the old flint-lock gun.

"If I can get him to let me," he said, "I'll fire it off, once or twice, while I'm here. I'd like to know how a flint works. Shouldn't wonder if it would kick, though, and I mustn't put in too much powder."

He took a great deal of pains with his dressing, considering how he meant to spend the day and that he must wear his every-day suit to go a-fishing in. At all events, he was determined to

set out with his collar and his necktie and his hair in good condition. By the time he was satisfied with himself and went for another look through the window, the whole sky was of a brighter color and he felt sure that the fowls had made no blunder. They were having a crow-and-cackle concert, now, and he remembered what Mr. Harris had said to him about eggs.

"Guess I'll go down and see the sun rise," he remarked to himself. "I want to know just how a day starts off in the country. Besides, I saw a spade out there, somewhere, and I can go for my worms."

He took a bait-box and belt out of his satchel, but Mr. Harris had promised to lend him all the other tackle he needed, and he left his own hooks and lines behind him. He decided not to put on his shoes till he got to the back door, and he crept down-stairs in his stocking-feet so softly that he was sure he had not awakened anybody. He was in the entry leading to the kitchen and was a little doubtful by which of several doors he was to find his way out of it, when he was startled by a jangling clatter of falling tin.

"Mercy!" exclaimed a woman's voice. "I wouldn't upset 'em all, Polly, if I were you. Did you spill anything?"

"If you haven't learned how to set up milk pans, at your age, Lib," was the answer, "I don't

know when you **will**. The cat just purred against 'em and down they came."

Chuck opened the door right in front of him, and there was Polly picking up the scatterings of what had been a stack of milk pans. One had rolled clean across the kitchen, into the dining-room, and another stood up with its back against the stove. There was a fire in the stove already, and Lib was at the sink peeling potatoes.

"Up already?" exclaimed Polly to Chuck, as he at once darted after the nearest milk pan.

"Good morning," said Lib. "You'll do for the country. Did Jerusha stir you out, or did Hiram?"

"Nobody," said Chuck. "I didn't mean to disturb anybody, but I might as well put on my shoes."

"Ha, Ha, Ha!" was about all the comment they made upon his effort at getting down-stairs silently, but it was evident that he had risen somewhat in their good opinion. Still, he had hardly gone out of the house, to hunt for the spade, before they both in one breath remarked — "But isn't he humbly!"

Then they made a number of other remarks about city boys and girls and the unprofitable ways of city people in general.

Mr. Harris was also up and out of the house, and so were Ben and the hired man, Jim. Chuck

found his spade and went alone to the garden after his worms. They were there, plenty of them, and so were bushes and vegetables and trees, and it seemed to him as if he had never before heard any birds. They were all around him, in every direction, and they were doing up all their singing for the whole day. He could hear them in spite of the barn-yard, and that was now turning into a sort of Babel. The strongest tongues coming from that quarter arose from the pig-pen. The cows chimed in now and then, and from away beyond all he heard loud bleatings, one of which reminded him of the most intelligent goat north of Harlem River.

It was cool and pleasant in the garden, and the soft earth was perfectly delicious digging. He filled his bait box rapidly, and one strong impression grew upon him, worm after worm, while he was doing so.

"If the fish," he said to himself, "are half as hungry as I am, there'll be the tallest kind of biting."

He was full of that idea when he went to the house, but he felt otherwise empty. He had eaten many breakfasts in the course of his life, but it did not seem to him that he could remember any other just like that. There was an abundance of good things to eat, and he was used to that, but some of them had a peculiarly up-coun-

try flavor, and there was all the while a rush of talk about matters and things of which he knew very little.

When the meal was ended, Chuck had asked and answered more questions than he or any one else had kept an account of. He felt sure that he had learned something, although he could not have said exactly what. Mr. Harris rose from the table and went to a closet in the corner. He took out a good joint rod and some lines, all in respectable working order, but Chuck noticed at once that the sinkers were nothing at all, in weight, compared with the chunks of lead called for by the swift, salt-water tides which he was accustomed to fish in.

"Now, Chuck," said Mr. Harris, "come right along with me."

"Never mind about what time you get home again," said Mrs. Harris. "Stay and fish as long as you feel like it."

"Bring back a good string," said Polly, with the kind of laugh which didn't expect him to do so.

"Don't tumble into the lake," said Lib.

"I won't," said Chuck, and he had tried to say "yes, ma'am" in the right place to answer the others.

Mr. Harris led the way and Chuck followed him, away back through the barn-yard and out into a pasture-lot where some cattle were feeding.

From the entrance of that lot, a pretty well-marked path pointed ahead, along a fence and over a hill.

"Follow that path, Chuck," said Mr. Harris. "I needn't go any further. It'll take you into the woods, and as soon as you're through them you'll see the lake. It's just about as good fishing in one place as it is in another."

Chuck thanked him and walked on, but it was a great deal like walking in a dream, for it seemed hardly real.

The morning was magnificent, and Chuck was just turning a thought to the city, wondering how things were looking around the grocery and inside of it and up-stairs, when a red squirrel chirruped on the top-rail of the fence and scurried away. Chuck was startled, but he watched the squirrel till it disappeared. Then a plaintive bleat made him turn, and a whole flock of silly-looking sheep were standing still to gaze at him. At that very moment he heard behind him a loud bark that he knew very well, and he spun around as if he had been called for.

There was Bob, whose name was Ben, coming on a full run. He behaved very much as if he were trying to explain something. What he probably meant to say was — "I've been out with Jim, 'tending to our cows. I'm ready, now, to come along and take you around."

He took himself around, in all directions, but Chuck walked fast until he was over the crest of the hill and could see woods before him. They were grand-looking woods, and he saw hardly anything else until he was in under their wonderful shadow and silence.

Then he stood still for a full minute, and felt the fact creep all over him and through him that he had never before been in just such a place.

He was half waked up by a racket that Bob was making while he pawed frantically at a woodchuck's hole. Nothing but the hole seemed to be at home and Bob gave it up, after almost making a cork of himself. From that point the path through the woods wound about as if a snake had laid it out, but pretty soon it led steeply downward. Wheels had traveled it, and their marks were yet visible in some places, for logs had been hauled over it from the edge of the water it ended in. Only a few minutes more of walking and there was the water, and Chuck drew his breath more quickly when he caught his first glimpse of it through the trees.

At the water's edge was hitched a clumsy punt of a boat, with a piece of board in it for a paddle.

"That's boat enough for one," said Chuck; "but I wouldn't care to go out on the Harlem in it."

The next moment he was on the solitary seat in

the middle of the punt and was plying the paddle. He was all alone, for the moment Bob saw him go to the boat he set off after something which may have been hidden among the bushes along shore. Perhaps he thought of crabs and sculpins, but at all events he was a land-dog and knew that he was no fisherman.

There was no need of anchoring and there was nothing to anchor with, and as soon as Chuck was well out from shore he got his rod and line in shape, baited a hook and began. The punt floated on, over the smooth, clear surface, with no other motion than Chuck gave it when he stirred around. It was just the right hour to be there and the fish were hungry. First, of course, came several pumpkin-seeds, but some pretty fair perch followed them. Three bull-heads came next and a fine bass, and then there was a long pause in the biting.

Chuck had time to look around him. He felt as if he had never before been quite so happy, and he did not really care whether or not he was to catch any more fish. It was a perfectly healthy place, but he was catching something else and did not know it. Perhaps it was nearer the truth to say that something he had caught already was having a chance to break out. The lake was hardly more than half a mile in circumference. It was nearly round and no road could come down

to it on any other side except the one toward the Harris farm. In every other direction the shores went up in high, steep, ragged fronts, varied here and there with great reaches of gray and mossy rock.

"There are trees and bushes everywhere, up and down 'em," remarked Chuck. "A fellow could get a hold to climb down by, but he might break his neck. It's the wildest kind of place."

That was the charm and the power of it, especially to a city boy. Not a rock there was higher or more perpendicular than the faces of some of the great buildings down town, but then there was nothing wild about them. Not a trace of human work was visible from the punt Chuck sat in, and he almost forgot that it was under him.

All he could see made him think of the Far West and of Indians and of mountains and of wigwams and log-houses. Then he thought of prairies and of gigantic forests that he had read of; but some of these had been where cities had since been built, and that thought sent him back to Wall Street and Broadway and Fifth Avenue, and it was not easy to believe that they were all in the same world.

"All that land was bought of the Indians once," said Chuck to himself; "and so was the Twenty-fourth ward."

That word let in a swarm of thoughts about

his home and his father and his mother and Nelly and Nap, and that wonderful Boy's Book. He had just about reached Phil Zimmerman and Mr. Gorrik when his hook was seized by a bass that weighed more than a pound, and everything but that bite vanished like a flash of powder. He pulled in his fish but he felt in no great hurry to try again.

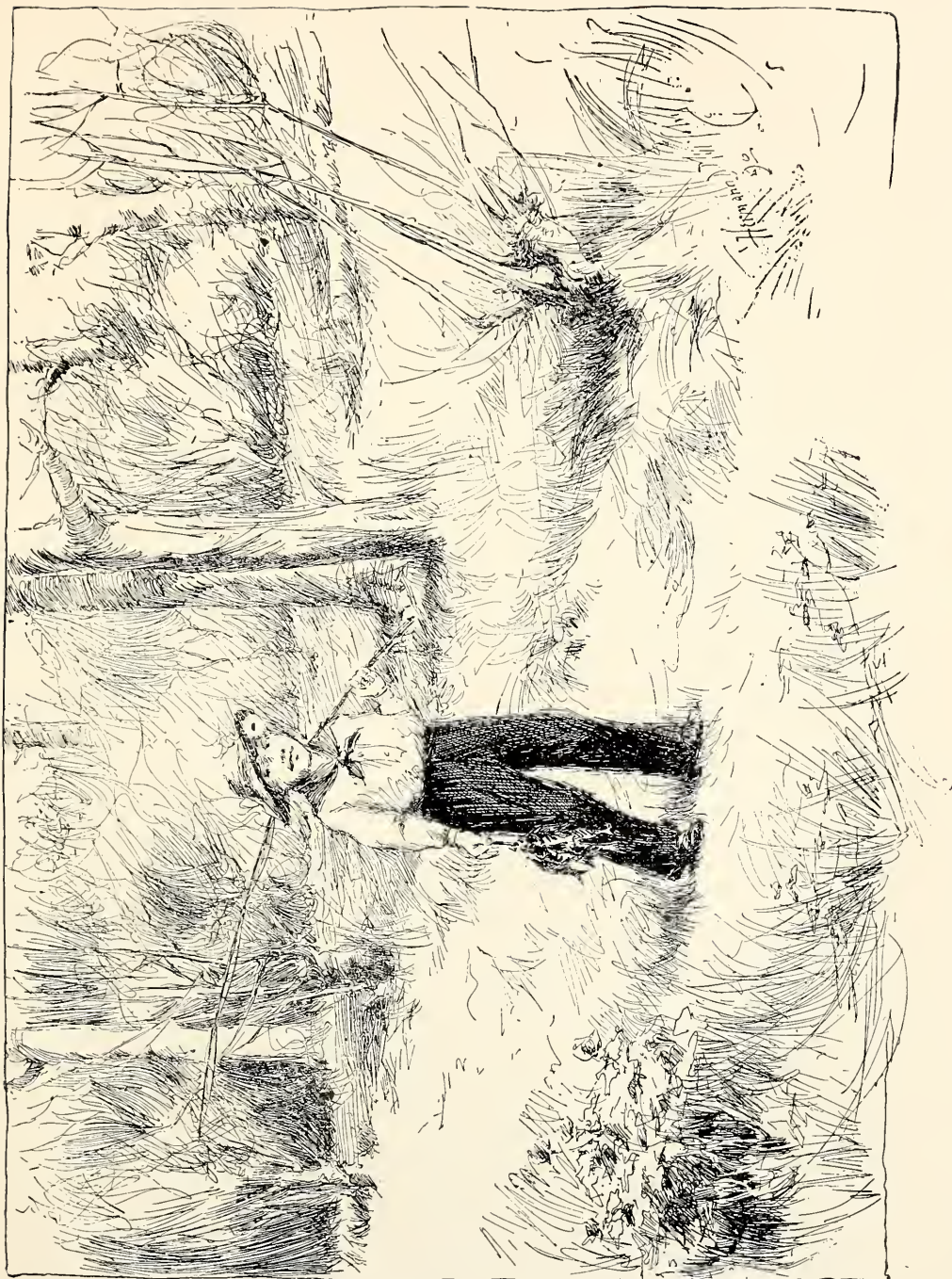
"Do you know," he said to himself, "I almost believe this is what they call thinking? Guess I never did so much of it before. Tell you what, Chuck Purdy, I'm going to be a man, some day. What do you say?"

That thought was what he had really been catching, all along, and it was getting more and more sure to stay by him. He had been pulling it in for several weeks, and now he had almost found out what it was. It is not every boy that really knows or cares what he is or what he is going to be.

Chuck put on another worm and threw out his line again, but he had a curious idea in his head that an older fellow was now fishing than the one who had tried in vain to coax Ben into that boat.

The fish bit less frequently as the sun rose higher and shone down more hotly, but one after another came for worms and was pulled in.

At last the idea came to Bob, whose country name was Ben, that his city visitor had sat out



A PRIME GOOD MESS.

there long enough. He sat down on the shore at the landing and barked accordingly. That brought Chuck's mind back from the ends of the earth somewhere, and he looked down and counted his fish.

"I hadn't any idea there were so many of them," he said. "I don't care to know just how many, shiners and all. Wonder how long I've been here."

He gave it up, but Ben did not give it up by any means, and Chuck replied to him — "I've got enough, Bob. I'm just going to circumnavigate this lake. Do you know what tribe of Indians used to fish here before any of us white men came?"

"Woof! Woof!" responded Ben.

That was probably not the name of the tribe, and Chuck took up his paddle. He found it slow work, propelling the punt with that, and he was soon contented to rest in front of the highest and most precipitous wall of rock and declare that right there was the most beautiful place that he had ever been in. He said it aloud, as he gazed up at the limestone ledges, but there was nobody to hear him or to wonder why he added — "I'm nobody but a grocery-boy, now, but I can climb. I'm beginning to find that out. I'll go ashore now and get Bob, and it'll be dinner-time before I can reach the house. I wish I knew some other

name for Polly and Lib, so I could speak right straight to 'em."

He remembered to say Ben, when he got to the landing-place, but that sagacious bull-dog was not yet quite sure that all the boating was over and retreated among the trees. He kept an eye on Chuck while he cut a willow-branch and strung the fish, and after that was done he was willing to lead the way homeward.

Mr. Harris was just going into the house for dinner, and his wife and her two tall sisters were putting things upon the table, when Ben arrived with the boy he had brought from the city, and the string of fish. He had the appearance and bearing of a dog who had expended his forenoon well.

"Hullo, now!" exclaimed Mr. Harris. "Why, Chuck, if that isn't a prime good mess!"

"Sakes alive!" said Mrs. Harris. "Bring 'em right into the house, Chuck, and show 'em to the girls."

He did so, and Ben went in with him to do the tail-wagging which properly belonged to so much success.

"I declare!" said Polly; "and he was never out in the country before!"

Her voice expressed pity for that fact as well as some surprise concerning the fish.

"Chuck," said Elizabeth, "put 'em down by

the well and wash your hands and come in to dinner."

None of the fish were as large as some which Chuck had pulled out of Harlem River, and some of them put him in mind of Lafayettes and tom-cods, but he was glad to have them praised. It was pleasant, also, to be considered a good fisherman, for a city boy, but he did not talk much until Polly made him give her a list of all the fish he had ever seen. Then it surprised him, a little, to find that he knew of some kinds that people in the country had never heard of. It was a royal good dinner, and it was voted that his string should be kept in the well until supper-time.

"They'll eat well then," said Polly.

CHAPTER XX.

EGGS AND BEES AND HORSES.

NELLY Purdy was up bright and early the morning after Chuck's departure, and her first thought was one of wonder as to what sort of place the Harris farm might be, and as to what Chuck might be doing at that moment. She felt very sure that he was not in bed.

"Bob is with him," she said, "and I almost wish he wasn't, so I could go down and feed him. I'll feed Dick."

She went down and did so, and was called a very homely girl for the first time in her life. She was so in the opinion of a goat who looked through a hole in the fence in the hope of seeing the handsomest boy he knew and of getting a handful of wilted vegetables. He looked steadily at Nelly for a minute or so, but the only remark he made was — "Bah-a-a-beh!"

She made no reply, for she went on into the stable to carry an apple to Napoleon. It was

only a withered old russet, beyond all selling, but he ate it gratefully and his whinny may have asked her—"Do you know what's become of Chuck?"

It was a particularly bright morning to Nelly, for even in visiting Dick and Nap the suggestion had come to her—"I'd like to know if I can't do almost anything Chuck can. Anyhow, Julia Cramer's got to work for it, if she's going to beat me next year."

She determined, before breakfast time came, that she would not look at her books during vacation, and as soon as she had reached that point she found herself making misty calculations as to what she could do with so many long days of hot weather.

Chuck Purdy, getting up from the Harris dinner-table, was under no difficulty as to what to do with himself, for he had an invitation to the harvest-field. He went out with Mr. Harris and learned many new things as they walked along. He had seen a scythe used, often enough, and knew how a cradle must work, but it was worth while to actually see the yellow grain come down.

"Do they ever use a sickle, nowadays?" he asked.

"Not anywhere around here that I know of," said Mr. Harris. "Men with big, level fields generally work a regular reaping-machine, but it'll

hardly pay me. I can cradle all the wheat I've got. Now you just cut around, anywhere you please — you and Ben — and have a good time."

That was what they did, after Chuck had watched the harvesting long enough, and had admired the beauty of the sheaves, and had seen two flocks of quails arise and scurry away. He went through more fields than one, and obtained a large number of new ideas, including a black snake over three feet in length.

Chuck felt a great, cold shiver, when he saw that snake wriggling away from him through the grass. It was only in obedience to a sort of blind instinct that he picked up a stone in one hand and a stick in the other and followed. Ben's courage did not go out after snakes, and he only stood still and barked with all his might. There was no battle whatever, for the stone was heavy and it came down on the snake's head with all the strength Chuck had in him.

"Killed him!" he shouted. "Killed him!" and then he added — "He isn't good for anything, what did I kill him for? Don't know. He hadn't any business to be a snake, anyhow."

As soon as he was sure of the killing, he took up the snake on the stick and carried him to Mr. Harris.

"Would it have killed me if he had bitten me?" he asked, excitedly.

"No," was the reply; "that kind isn't poisonous. They're great on eggs and small chickens, though."

"Glad I killed him, then," said Chuck.

"Don't know," said Mr. Harris. "I've heard a man say a good smart black snake was worth two owls to keep a piece of land clear of moles and field-mice and such. They was made for something. Glad you had some fun, anyhow; only you needn't take him to the house. Jerusha wouldn't cook him for ye."

"Well, no," said Chuck; "I couldn't make her believe 'twas an eel."

"Hogs'll eat 'em," said Mr. Harris, "or any other kind of snake. There was a man, up 'mong the mountains, that'd ruther eat fried rattlesnake than any eels you could bring him."

"Woof!" exclaimed Ben. And that remark nearly expressed Chuck's own opinion.

What Ben really meant was — "Come along, now, and let's have another hunt. You haven't seen half our farm yet."

Chuck threw the snake into a fence corner and followed Ben. Where they went and what they saw, after that, was of no manner of consequence to anybody but themselves. They worked hard, however, and when they came to the house for supper, Chuck felt as if he did not care to do any more harvesting that day. He was ready to do

so well by the fish, and so were they all, that Mrs. Harris remarked to her husband —

“I’m glad he had such good luck. There’s two on ’em left and he can have ’em for breakfast.”

After supper Jim attended to some chores and the women did the milking. Chuck was quite contented to sit on the front stoop with Mr. Harris and hear him tell yarns until bedtime. He thought the best story of all was one that belonged to that house and farm and the Revolutionary War.

“General Howe,” said Mr. Harris, “he and the British regulars were after Washington and the Continentals. They were up nigh White Plains. That’s where the battle was fought and where my great grandfather was killed. Part of the British came up by this road, right past the house. The women folks was here, but the horses and most of the cattle had been drove north. The British and some Hessians came in and searched the house and the barns and swore awful because there wasn’t much to steal. They got two pigs and three old hens, but there was more pigs than that. They and the chickens were over in the woods by the lake. The ducks and geese were in the lake, having a good time. The spoons and some other things were in a pail at the end of a rope at the bottom of the well.”

“Did they plunder the house?” asked Chuck,

excitedly, for it seemed to him as if he could imagine the files of red-coats marching up the road.

"They got some bed-clothes, but all the best of 'em were away over beyond the hill, in a ravine I'll take ye to while you're here, and there was bushes piled over 'em."

"Did they kill anybody?" asked Chuck.

"Only just one dog. He bit a Hessian and got himself bayoneted."

"Good for that dog!" said Chuck. "Sorry he got killed, though."

"It was against Howe's orders to hurt the country people," said Mr. Harris, "but the Hessians did pretty much as they pleased. The folks got along as best they could till Howe's army marched back to New York, and then the spoons came up out of the well."

There were more things to tell about those old times and Chuck asked for the history of the gun in his room.

"That?" said Mr. Harris; "why, that's a King's arm."

"What on earth's that?" asked Chuck.

"Why, it's an old British musket that was thrown away in front of the house by a lame soldier, when Gen. Howe's army retreated. The women folks picked it up and brought it in."

"I'd like to fire it," said Chuck.

"You couldn't do it," replied Mr. Harris.

"The touch-hole's been rusted tight up for fifty years. I tried to clear it out and fire it, one Fourth of July, when I was a boy. I don't believe it's been fired for a hundred years—not since the battle of White Plains. I keep it iled up, though, for a kind of curiosity."

Chuck felt that if he had such a gun it would be worth keeping in a glass case, and when he went up to his room it seemed to make him remember a hay-stack of things he thought he had forgotten. He stared at it for some time, but it was of no use to think up history, after he went to bed. The next thing he knew anything about was the morning chorus from the barn-yard.

"Eggs!" he exclaimed, as he sprang out of bed. "I am going to have a hunt for some, all over the barns."

He received further instructions concerning egg-hunting, at the breakfast table, from Polly. He had learned, now, that her name was Miss Morgan and so was Elizabeth's, so that he was in no further danger of being disrespectful.

"Behind the hay-mow," she said, "and in the corners, and in the mangers and under 'em, and in the old sleigh, and up in the loft, and under the sheds outside, and in 'most any place that you wouldn't expect to find 'em in."

"You won't find hens' nests in any stall where

a horse is," said Lib; "or if there's any there, you needn't go in after 'em. Horses kick careless a little, sometimes. Don't you get hurt."

Chuck finished his breakfast and took a basket and started. The moment Ben saw the basket, he knew what was to be done and made for the barn. His conduct after he got there proved that he meant to keep all rats away from Chuck while he was hunting eggs.

There were hens enough, of a dozen different breeds, and they had cackled tremendously that morning. All that boastful chattering must have stood for eggs, and it was three days since the nests had been visited.

Ben almost immediately disappeared under the big barn, while Chuck was searching the sheds outside. He had seen barrels and baskets and boxes of eggs, year after year, brought into his father's grocery, and he had sorted out and sold any quantity of them. He had taken less interest in the entire lot of them, put together, than in the first solitary egg he now found in a corner of the cow-shed. Then he found four in the wagon-shed, but one of them was a marked nest-egg. He got two more before he entered the small barn, and here he had expected something like a harvest. He was disappointed. There were some horses in the stalls on the right, as he went in. There were grain-bins and a stack of

wheat straw on the left, but he searched in vain for eggs. "Not one," he said, disappointedly. "May be the hens have got a prejudice against this barn."

He understood the matter better after he went out and shut the door behind him.

"I see," he said. "It fits tight, and there are wire fenders over the windows. Not a hen can get in, and I've been working for nothing. That's what Mr. Harris calls his training-stable, and it's cleaner'n some stores in the city."

That was more than could be said of the big barn that he went into next; but he found eggs now, and had any amount of fun in finding them. High and low, in and out, over the hay-mow, away back in dark corners of the loft over the cow-stable; wherever he imagined a hen could go to hide her treasures away from him, Chuck clambered and crept and investigated.

"More than two dozen, now," he exclaimed, triumphantly. "The old Revolutionary barn looks as if it might belong to the hens. Come on, Bob — Ben — we'll see what's there."

Ben did not exactly "come on", for he was performing duties which he laid out for himself, and he had already captured one rat. As for Chuck, he kept his word and found out what was in the old barn. In the first place, he found that it was a store-house of odds and ends — old sleigh, new

sleigh, old harness, barrels, lumber, ploughs, harrows, all sorts of tools, work-bench, sacks of oats, a row of bins with lids to them that kept out hens, hay, straw, dust, cobwebs, and over all a kind of close, dull air, that seemed to have been there a long time.

This was the best hunting yet, so far as the hunting-ground itself was concerned, and Chuck was in a state of intense excitement.

"Got another dozen!" he shouted, before a great while. Now for that corner behind the hay."

Over the hay he clambered and it was into a peculiarly dim, cobwebby, mysterious-looking corner. There should have been a nest there, he thought, and he poked around industriously. He was looking but he was not listening, and all the while a low, soft, murmuring sound had grown louder and louder under the hay in that extreme corner of the ancient barn.

"Ouch — yah!" he suddenly shouted. "What's that?"

"Woof!" replied Ben, from the floor to which he had slipped back, after a vain attempt to climb the pile of hay.

"Yah!" exclaimed Chuck, once more. "Bees! Lots of 'em! Got another! More coming!"

It was time for him to go. Bee after bee was working his way up through the loose hay to pro-

tect what he and not any hen had hidden in that corner.

"I'll stick to the basket," cried Chuck. "Oh, but don't they hurt! Right on my cheek! On my left ear! Oh, my! They're coming after me!"

That was what the bees were doing, vigorously, and it required all the courage Chuck had to keep him from dropping his basket, eggs and all, before he got out of the barn. Ben was out first, and seemed to be assailed by a sudden fit of rolling over and over and yelping.

"They've stung him, too," said Chuck, just as the dismayed bull-dog took another roll and then started for the house on an excited but somewhat zigzag run. The house door was open and he dashed right in, nor did he stop till he was away under the lounge in the sitting-room.

"What is the matter with that dog?" asked Polly. "Is he going mad, Jerusha? It's been awful hot weather."

"Hear him pant!" said Lib.

"Woof! Yip!" responded Ben, from under the lounge; and Mrs. Harris was going for the broom to drive him out with when Polly almost shouted —

"Lib! Jerusha! Look at that there boy! Something's lit onto him."

"Wasps is after him," said Lib.

"Shouldn't wonder if that's what's the matter with Ben," said Mrs. Harris. "Wait a moment, till Chuck gets in."

They did not have long to wait, and they were all in the door-way when he came toward them, slapping himself here and there with one hand while he clung to his basket of eggs with the other.

"Chuck Purdy," said Mrs. Harris, "what on earth's the matter?"

"What is it?" exclaimed Polly.

"What are you hitting yourself for, in that way?" asked Lib.

"Bees!" responded Chuck. "Got a whole lot of eggs. Got stung" —

"Bees!" exclaimed Mrs. Harris. "Bumblebees' nest? Where'd you find 'em?"

"In the old barn. Swarm of 'em. Stung me all over. Stung Ben. Lots of eggs. Oh, my ear!"

"Come along in, then, and I'll put on some hartshorn," said Mrs. Harris; and all the sympathy those women had for Chuck did not keep them from laughing. As Lib said to Polly — "He was humbly enough before, and what won't he look like now!"

Ear, cheek, nose, an arm, a leg, a hand, had suffered from the wrath of the disturbed honey-makers, and the smarting was hot enough, but Chuck endured it like a hero.

"Guess you'll stay in the house for the rest of the forenoon," said Lib, while Mrs. Harris was at work with the hartshorn. "There's three dozen and four eggs, and that's pretty good, for this season of the year."

"Do you ever get more than that?" asked Chuck.

"What, for three days, with all our hens?" she exclaimed. "Why, in the early spring, when they're all a laying and before we've sold any of last year's pullets, I've brought in four dozen of a morning."

"Seventy dozen make a barrel of eggs," said Chuck; but the hartshorn on his nose began to strangle him just then, and he had to stop and cough.

The rest of the talk, that morning, related more to honey than to eggs, and Chuck heard the history of the Harris farm concerning yellow-jackets, hornets and bee-trees. As the smartings of his hurts diminished, the swellings of them increased, and he was a fine-looking boy when Mr. Harris came in to dinner. Ben had no hartshorn, but he did not seem to swell, and after a while he came out from under the lounge. He evidently did not feel very cheerful, however, and went and lay down beside the chair Chuck sat and smarted in.

"Hullo, Chuck," said Mr. Harris, the moment

he entered the room; "what have you been doing to your face?"

"Bees!" said Chuck; and then the whole story had to be told.

"First-rate place for 'em," said Mr. Harris. "Biggest kind of nest, most likely. I'll take a look after dinner, but I won't try to break 'em up till dark, when they're all quiet. Jerusha, the wheat's all in. Tip-top yield. Best crop we've had for four years."

"Glad of that, Hiram," she said. "Now you can take a rest."

"Well, a kind of rest. The brown colt's been in the stable too long. I'm going to train him a little, after dinner. Will you come along, Chuck? No bees?"

"Guess I will," said Chuck, and he seemed to feel better, from that moment. By the time he had finished his dinner he cared more about fast horses and a ride behind one than for all the bee-stings in the Revolutionary barn. He had heard the entire pedigree of the brown colt, and knew that much was expected from a quadruped so well descended.

"How far are you going to drive?" asked Chuck.

"Way over to old Pratt's, two mile above Tuckahoe," said Mr. Harris. "Got an errand there for you."

"For me?" asked Chuck.

"Well, yes; that's where Ben came from. There was two or three pups left over from a litter this year, and Pratt said I might have one of 'em. I didn't want it then, but I told him I should if I didn't find Ben, and he wasn't to let him go. He'll be ready for you."

Chuck wanted to say "hurrah" right at the table, but he held in. As soon as dinner was over they went out to the barn, and it was not long before the brown colt was harnessed in front of a light-built buggy.

"He's a good deal like Nap," said Chuck to himself; "only he came out of the stable without making any fuss. That's what spoils Nap."

Nothing had yet spoiled the brown colt, but he had nerves as well as Napoleon, and they were no sooner in the road than Mr. Harris was led to remark — "Don't you see? He needed exercise."

So he did, no doubt, and only the strength of his driver's arms and the steady skill he displayed, prevented the colt from getting more exercise than was good for either him or the buggy.

"Can't he travel, though?" said Mr. Harris, proudly, as they spun along the road. "Isn't he a good one? Gentle as a kitten. No vices. Sound as a nut. Only needs training. Worth a pile of money. It's too hot or I'd speed him."

Chuck thought that that was what he was

doing. For his own part, he was treasuring up every small item of horse knowledge which fell from the lips of Hiram Harris.

"Is he going to be a race-horse?" he ventured to inquire, at last.

"Well, he is," said Mr. Harris; "but he won't do any gambling work while I own him. Do you s'pose all the good horses was made just to bet on and cheat with, and take fools to ruin? I guess not. I just love a good horse."

So did Chuck, and again his thoughts went back to Nap and home.

On went the brown colt, and it was not a long time before he was pulled up in front of a queer old house, with solid, green-painted blinds, of the old-fashioned sort, that stood at the roadside.

"Needn't get out," said Mr. Harris. "Old Pratt's a coming."

The door opened as he ceased speaking, and a deep, gruff voice came through it before any man did —

"Come for the pup, have ye?" said the voice. "I knowed ye would, and I kep him for ye. Have him out there in a minute. Best kind of pup."

He seemed a very heavy-footed, uneven walker, from the noise he made on the floor, and the moment he came out Chuck glanced at his feet. He remembered afterward that they were very

large and were covered by the strongest kind of thick-soled cowhide shoes. Just then all his attention instantly centered upon something old Pratt brought in his hands. It was a remarkably beautiful dog, or at least Chuck thought so.

"Thoroughbred," said old Pratt, through a tremendous, wiry, grizzly-red beard and moustache, while his broad, freckled, wrinkled face expressed strong admiration. "White all over. Not a speck on him. Four months old yesterday. Isn't he lovely?"

Many people would have said "no" at once, and those who knew little about dogs might have added that the spotless young fellow lifted into the buggy by old Pratt promised to become a very large, bow-legged, wicked-looking, dangerous bulldog, and that he would never let go of any bite as long as he should live.

"He's a beauty," said Mr. Harris. "Now, Billy Pratt, you and I are square. I've got Ben back, but this pup's got to go to the city in place of him."

"All right," said Pratt. "Ben isn't quite thoroughbred or he wouldn't be black. This one's the old breed."

Chuck had said nothing to either of them, but he had taken the puppy in his arms, and his first remark to him was — "Bob!"

"That's his name," said old Pratt, and in a

moment more he was stamping into the house, while the brown colt was trotting briskly homeward.

The three women of the Harris family had a great deal to say concerning the white bull-dog, on his arrival, but they all agreed that he never could, by any possibility, become the dog that Ben was. Ben himself took kindly to his young relative. But for the difference in their ages it might have been otherwise, but as it was he was willing to receive him to the same plate of scraps without first trying to see which was the best dog. Chuck had had very little to say except about dogs, all the way home, but no sooner was Bob on proper terms with Ben than Mr. Harris remarked —

“Chuck! Bees! How does your face feel?”

“My ear’s pretty heavy, but it doesn’t hurt any,” said Chuck. “I never want to be stung again.”

“There’s more of your face than there ever was before,” said Mr. Harris. “We’ll put the colt up and then I want you to show me just where that nest is. It won’t do to have it there.”

Out they went, and in putting the colt in the stall, Mr. Harris gave Chuck a good look at two other horses besides his working team.

“All but them’ll be out to grass again in a few

uays," he said. "Those two are five-year-olds. The colt's only four. One of 'em's only saddle-broke, but I'm going to put him in harness. He's pony-built, but he's a good one. How'd you like to ride him?"

"Just the thing I'd like to do," said Chuck, with much energy; but Mr. Harris had already turned away toward the Revolutionary barn.

They went inside first, and climbed cautiously up over the hay, but not a bee molested them.

"Right over in that corner," said Chuck; "away down, I don't know how far."

"It's curious," said Mr. Harris. "Let's go around and take a look, outside."

They did so, and hardly had they reached the corner of the barn, before its owner uttered a sharp exclamation.

"Bumble-bees?" he said. "No, they're not. They're regular honey bees. There was a swarm lit in the orchard last year, and old man Davis came and took 'em away, and there was one the year before and I don't know where they went. I don't see how any swarms could have got into the old barn."

Nobody else could have seen, for neither of those swarms ever went into it. By watching some bees that were coming home, wax and honey laden, it was easy to discover what holes they went in at, however.

"There's enough of 'em to have stung my head off," remarked Chuck.

"Guess you got off pretty well," said Mr. Harris; "but they might play the very mischief with some of my colts. A young horse that's been stung is never the same horse again. He'll start and shy at anything."

Whether or not that was correct, it was decided to make further explorations after dark, and Chuck went in to supper in a fever of excitement concerning bees in general and those who had stung him, in particular.

Supper was eaten, and even then Mr. Harris waited until it was positively dark. Then he brought out from the kitchen-corner closet a large, wire-fended lantern and lighted it. He put a silk handkerchief over his head and down his neck and put on a pair of old gloves. As soon as he had made Chuck do the same he said he was ready for bees.

"I'm bound to know what's down in that corner and I won't wait for old man Davis to tell me how to find out."

Chuck already knew that that neighbor possessed all the bee-wisdom in the vicinity. Mr. Harris took a pitchfork with him and they went together into the old barn. The first thing to do was to remove the hay.

"It's old hay," said Mr. Harris. "I don't

know how long some of it in the corner has been there. See how it's packed."

He used his fork slowly and cautiously, while Chuck held the lantern, and it was full ten minutes before he suddenly exclaimed — "I declare!"

"What is it?" asked Chuck.

"That's where my frost-boxes went to. I missed 'em one spring, nearly a dozen of 'em, and couldn't remember where I'd stowed 'em."

Chuck peered forward and saw what seemed a small stack of boxes, each about ten inches square, open on one side and closed on the other by a pane of glass. They were such as gardeners put over young plants to protect them from the frost, and Chuck said he knew all about them.

"That isn't what they're doing now, though," said Mr. Harris. "I wish I knew which of 'em was playing bee-hive. I've seen patent bee-hives that wasn't much of an improvement on 'em."

That was about so, but the secret was out. The vagrant swarms of bees had not gone into the Revolutionary barn because they had come from it.

"Now, Chuck, we mustn't disturb 'em; but I'll have to bring old man Davis over here, after all. I'll take as close a look as I dare to."

He did so, and in a minute he added —

"This last box on the lower row is jam full of honey. Some of it's dark, old-comb honey. I

don't believe there's a bee in that box. I'll risk it, anyhow."

He was perfectly safe in so doing, and all the other boxes were left behind when Mr. Harris and Chuck marched out of the barn carrying off a case of just as good honey as was ever made in a patent hive.

There was a noisy reception waiting them at the house, for Ben connected the smell of honey with the idea of more angry bees and barked furiously, while the women hardly had words enough with which to express their surprise.

"Be careful how much honey you eat," said Lib, as she handed Chuck a plate of bread and a saucer with a great piece of comb on it. "Too much of it'll make you the sickest kind. It's real good, though."

So it was, and Chuck slept soundly that night in spite of the honey-comb.

CHAPTER XXI.

SETTLED ON A FARM.

WHEN Chuck Purdy got out of bed the next morning, it seemed to him as if he had been living in the country a long time. He was well aware that, away down south, miles and miles, there was a great city in which he used to live, but now he belonged here and had a white bull-dog puppy four months old waiting for him down-stairs. There would also be honey on the cakes he was to have for breakfast, and his nose and ear had come back to their natural size.

He was mistaken about the new Bob. That remarkable animal was already being rolled over and over on the grass by the old Bob, whose country name was Ben. There were three of them as soon as Chuck got there; but he was almost immediately called in to eat his breakfast.

Mr. Hiram Harris was very nearly excited upon the subject of bees. He did not wish to keep any, for he had tried it once, and was sure that

they did not do well on the Harris farm. He hardly talked about anything else, however, until he had returned from a visit to his neighbor, "old man Davis." The bee-man came back with him, and Chuck's first thought was, that he never could have eaten much honey. He was small, thin, withered, almost white-headed, and his face had an expression as if he had a piece of alum in his mouth. He brought a large hive with him, and they all went to the barn and stood outside while he went in and shut the door.

"It's kind o' mysterious, Polly," said Mrs. Harris. "Nobody ever could find out how he did it."

"All the bees know him," replied Polly, "and he doesn't make 'em mad."

"I heard once," said Lib, "when I was a girl, that he knew all his own bees by name."

"It's just as good, if they all know him and keep their stings to themselves," said Mr. Harris. "He won't ever kill a bee."

It was not very long before he came out, bringing with him another of the frost-boxes.

"It's jam full of comb," he said; "but there's two more with work going on in 'em. There's been king-birds around, I guess, for the hive's weak. May be they swarmed away too much. Anyhow, I'll take 'em all away."

"Right now?" asked Mrs. Harris.

"Just as soon as you folks get away from 'round

the door. Don't ye speak to me or to them bees while we're a-goin' out of the yard."

He went into the barn again and Lib exclaimed indignantly — "It's all superstition!"

"You won't say so if you stay and get stung," said Mr. Harris. "I'm off. Come along, Chuck, you've had enough. Come on, Jerusha."

Lib and Polly were quite superstitious enough to follow, considering that a hive of bees was coming after them. In a minute or so more, old Davis marched out of the barn, slowly and undisturbedly, singing something or other, in a low, pleasant voice. There were bees in the air around him, but they did not seem troubled much by the fact that moving-day had come to them. The bee-man walked on, out of the gate and into the road and homeward, and the Revolutionary barn was once more safe to hunt for eggs in.

"Two boxes of honey!" exclaimed Elizabeth; "and they didn't cost a cent."

"Now, Chuck," said Mr. Harris, "this is horse day. I want to see you on Jim's back once."

"Hiram," said his wife, "that there pony may throw him. Don't you let him go and break his neck."

"He won't break anything, Jerusha. Come along, Chuck. We'll take the colt out for a drive afterward."

By the time they reached the barn-yard again,

he knew that Chuck had never yet mounted a horse and had told him that he must take his first lesson bare-back.

"Once you learn to stick on without any saddle, you'll find out quick enough what to do with stirrups. It's the way all the cadets have to begin at the West Point Military Academy."

Jim was hardly a pony, and seemed to be as tame as Ben. He stood quietly while a bridle was put upon his head and a blanket was belted upon his back.

"Now, Chuck," said Mr. Harris, "by and by you'll mount him with a spring, but I'll give you a lift this first time."

So he did, and the moment Chuck was mounted Hiram began to play ring-master. He was training the horse as well as the boy, and neither of them perfectly understood the orders he gave, whip in hand. Jim at last seemed to understand that one of the words used by his master meant "roll over", for he at once tried to do it.

"Jump, Chuck!" shouted his trainer, and Chuck swung himself off just in time. Over and over went Jim, and he was whipped for doing it, so that the whip and the roll-over would keep together in his memory.

There was altogether too much in Chuck's mind for any two ideas to keep together. He had been in a sort of whirl, from the moment

when he found himself astride of that horse, and all he had felt able to do was to cling with his knees, hold the bridle, which he was forbidden to pull on, and wonder how soon he would be pitched off. He now remembered hoping that he might come down in a soft place. Nevertheless, it had been the most exciting kind of fun, and he asserted, eagerly — "I can do better next time, Mr. Harris."

"Of course you can," was the reply. "You balance yourself naturally, and some fellows never do it. Guess it's 'cause they're afraid or something. Get on him again. Climb him without any help."

At the end of more than an hour of sharp exercise, Chuck felt that he had had enough for once; but it was Mr. Harris who said so.

"Every day you're here, Chuck," said Mr. Harris, "if there's time, and after that I'm going to put Jim into harness. Now for the brown colt."

The brown seemed glad enough to get out of the stable, and Chuck had another capital lesson in the great art of driving horses. Hiram Harris could talk his best, as he said, with the ribbons in his hands. According to him, all the really great men in all the world were fond of good horses, from Alexander the Great to General Grant, but he may have missed a few. He knew a long list, anyhow, and Chuck felt very sure that he himself

was one of them, so far as liking horses went. At all events, he was in a new school, and he was learning lessons that he was not likely to forget. The shaking Jim gave him that morning was not forgotten by some of his bones for three or four days.

The soreness he felt, after dinner, was one reason why he was so contented to stay around the house and do almost nothing, while Mr. Harris went off to attend to some business. Bob and Ben were the other reasons, and there was hardly any need for Mrs. Harris to feel the anxiety she did.

"Polly," she said, "I don't know what on earth that poor boy will do to amuse himself. There ain't no other boys right around here for him to play with."

"Guess he hasn't missed 'em, up to this time," said Polly.

"Well, no," remarked Lib; "but then he can't have bees all the time."

Chuck had not yet felt anything like loneliness, but he was ready to set off at once when Mr. Harris came home and proposed that they should go to the lake for a swim.

"'Twon't be like salt water," said he. "Do you know how?"

"Been in lots of times," said Chuck. "Guess I could swim across the lake."

"Come along, then," said Hiram; and they

went, but they were hardly gone before Lib remarked — "That's curious, now. To think of a city boy knowing as much as he does!"

Chuck and Hiram had a good swim, at all events, and the lake seemed the most secluded and perfect bathing place that could be imagined. On their way home, Mr. Harris said — "What are you going to do to-morrow, Chuck?"

"Don't know. Hadn't thought about it. I'm ready for anything," said Chuck.

"Well, I'll be away all the forenoon. You come out here and fish. Then we'll give the horses another turn. You can practise on Jim first. Then it'll be the brown colt and then the double team. They've got to be exercised."

There were other horses to come in from pasture soon, and Chuck was getting it into his head that men who raised horses had to keep a sort of school for them if they were ever to be worth anything. Perhaps that idea was in his head after they got back to the house, for he at once took the white bull-dog puppy in hand and opened a school for him that lasted until bedtime.

The next day had a lesson for Chuck. He dug abundant bait and started for the lake good and early, followed by encouraging remarks.

"Don't get drowned," said Mrs. Harris.

"Bring home a bigger string than you did the other time," said Polly.

"I want more bass and not so many pumpkin-seeds and shiners," added Lib. "No bull-heads. I got one of their horns into my thumb."

She was in no danger this time. Everything seemed to be just as it was the first time, when Chuck reached the lake. Bob remained at the house, but Ben was there on the shore hunting through the bushes for the game that was not there. The water and the rocks were in their regular places and not a fish could possibly have gone a-visiting. All that was true, and it aroused Chuck's expectations to fever-heat; but he was twice as feverish after he had sat in that punt for an hour and had not felt a nibble.

"Guess I'm in the wrong place," he said to himself, and so he pulled in his line and paddled over near some rocks.

Another hour went by and all the luck he had was one small shiner that was on his hook when he pulled in. He had not so much as felt that fellow bite. Chuck felt very warm all over, when he saw that shiner.

"Wonder where all the fish have gone to, he grumbled. "It looks as if I wasn't going to catch anything."

It looked more and more so, the longer he sat in that punt and the more new places he tried. The sun went up higher and higher, the day grew hotter and hotter, the lake was as smooth

as a looking-glass, and the pond-lilies looked as if they had all gone to sleep.

"It's no use!" he exclaimed, mournfully, at last. "I'd better go home. It's 'most noon, anyhow. Oh, but won't they make fun of me!"

The fish had played one joke on him and Ben had played another. Not long after discovering that this was a fishing-day for his visitor from the city, Ben had trotted away to the house to see what Bob was doing. It was of no use for Chuck to shout and whistle, after he reached the landing-place, but he felt more and more disgusted.

"No fish," he said, "no dog, no nothing."

He felt worse and worse every step of the way to the house, and when Mrs. Harris asked him, from the kitchen door—

"Well, Chuck, where's your fish?"

Polly added—

"They're all in the lake, I guess," and Lib said—"That's fisherman's luck."

"Not a bite!" was all he could say, and even Bob stood behind Ben and barked at him, as if he were a stranger.

Mr. Harris made plenty of fun of the matter when he came in from the barn, but he had also a piece of comfort.

"Chuck," he said, "there isn't much game around here, but I bought some ammunition this

morning, and you may take my gun to-morrow and see what you can do."

"He mustn't shoot any robbins," said Jerusha, instantly.

"Chuck," said Lib; "bring me home a bear. I'll fry him for you."

All the morning's weary waiting was forgotten in a moment, nevertheless, and Chuck ate his dinner cheerfully.

The rest of that day was spent among the horses, according to the plan of Mr. Harris. The instant Chuck found Jim under him he felt that something new and good had come. Even Mr. Harris noticed a change.

"That's it," he said. "You're going to learn to ride, the quickest kind. You'll know a heap before you go home."

"I feel more at home on him, anyhow," replied Chuck, as Jim cantered away.

While they were out with the brown colt and the bay team, Mr. Harris let him take the reins several times, but Chuck noticed that the horses seemed instantly to know the difference.

"They always do, Chuck," said their owner.

"Any horse a'most, knows what sort of a hand is on him, and most of all, whether you're afraid of him. Just that thing'll rouse all the mischief there is in some horses. Don't you ever be afraid of anything, horse or man."

He was at that moment feeling particularly sure that he should never be afraid of a gun, unless it were pointed at him.

The drive ended, the horses were put away, supper was eaten, and then Chuck sat down on the front stoop while the evening came on, and while Hiram Harris told about all the wild animals he had ever heard of among the hills east of Tuckahoe. The largest now remaining appeared to be woodchucks and rabbits, and not many of them.

"Plenty of quails, you said," remarked Chuck, doubtfully.

"Oh, yes, if you had a dog and knew how to go for them. Partridges, too, and woodcock, in their season, and sometimes pigeons. I've shot ducks on the lake in the fall, and squirrels are plenty some years about nutting time. Go ahead and see what you can do."

Chuck had already had a look at the gun he was to carry, and it had made him wish for abundant game.

"No fooling with powder and wads and caps and shot and a ramrod," he said, admiringly, as Mr. Harris explained to him the management of that tip-top breech-loader and its cartridges.

"No, sir!" said its equally admiring owner. "No danger of your bursting it, either. Most likely you won't hit anything, but you can go and have a good time."

"It'll be worse than fisherman's luck," said Lib to Polly; "but we needn't tell him so."

"I'm going to let him shoot some pigeons off the barn, when he comes home," said Jerusha. "There's too many on 'em, and we can make a pot-pie. They're all the game there is 'round here."

That was very nearly all there was to be said about it, so far as sport was concerned, but it was not all to Chuck. He spent the most of the next day in the woods and it was a wonderful day. He saw, or thought he saw, quite a number of living creatures which somehow got away from him. At all events he hunted. That was a great thing to do, for a boy who had spent all his growing time in the Twenty-fourth ward.

Hardly a solitary thought took shape in his mind, all day long. Everything there was as dim and shadowy as were the woods themselves, but he enjoyed it amazingly. He fired off quite a number of Hiram Harris's cartridges and learned some things about that kind of gun.

He got home late in the afternoon, and all he had to show for his ammunition and his tramping was three blackbirds, two quails and a crow.

"That'll do," said Mrs. Harris. "You've done better'n I thought you would; but I won't cook the crow. Now you go out to the barn and see if you can shoot half a dozen pigeons for me."

He was proud to do it, and he only had to shoot twice into the flock before he had fulfilled his commission. Bob and Ben went with him, and it looked as if the youngster were taking lessons in barking from his elder cousin, who had visited in the great city.

By this time, Chuck began to feel as if he were a temporary member of the Harris family. Neither Polly nor Lib hesitated any longer about asking him to bring in a pail of water, and he liked them better every time they sent him to the well. The days went by more easily one after another. They were more alike, too, and Chuck hardly knew how many had come and gone when Mr. Harris brought him a letter.

"That's from Nelly!" he exclaimed, as he took it, and then he added—"Hullo! She isn't in the city!"

The post-mark gave him that information, and then the inside of the letter told him of an invitation she had received from the Cramers to go with them away up among the Catskill Mountains, and stay two or three weeks in a farm-house every way equal to any it was possible for Mr. Harris to own. All the Harris family were interested in the contents of that letter, and it may have made them jealous, for Lib said—

"Now, Chuck, you just pitch in and have a better time than they can give her. This is as good

as the Cattskills, any day, and no climbing to do."

"I hope she'll have a good time," said Chuck; "but she can't beat this."

Nelly was enjoying herself, and she was especially glad to receive the tremendous letter Chuck sent her. It was very long, however, and very full, and writing it spurred him to send almost a copy of it home. That was an effort, but he did not know how many times his mother read it over.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NEW BOY IN A NEW CITY.

THREE long weeks went by, and when the fourth began it was Elizabeth herself who remarked to Polly —

“Well, yes; it’s time he went home and his mother says he ought to come, but I’d as lief he’d stay all summer.”

“So would Hiram,” said Polly; “and Jerusha says she’ll miss his humbly face as soon as he’s gone. How that pup has grown!”

That was so, but nobody could see that Chuck had changed a hair, for he was sunburned when he came. He had grown, however, tremendously. He had learned to ride and to drive. He knew a wonderful list of things about a farm. He had been fishing again and again, and he had been out with a gun three times. It had been a grand three weeks, but Nelly’s visit among the mountains was over and Mrs. Purdy was sure the Harries must be tired of Chuck. She knew he ate a

great deal, and she was afraid he might be in the way. So she had written to him to come home.

He was to return by rail, and one of the difficulties of traveling in that manner was suggested to him as soon as he had fixed upon Wednesday for going.

"You can't take Bob into a railway car," said Mr. Harris. "They never allow a dog on board a train."

"Will they take him in the baggage-car?" asked Chuck, after a moment of deep and gloomy thinking.

"Perhaps they may. Can't tell. See when we get to the train. If they won't, I'll keep him here and bring him down some time in the fall, if I don't drive down any sooner."

Chuck thanked him, but the matter weighed upon his mind until Wednesday morning. Then Lib and Polly came to his relief. They had held a council with Mrs. Harris, and they had brought down from the garret a large, old, ragged, willow basket, with a broken handle.

"You can tie the cover on," said Polly, "after you put Bob in. The conductor won't know but what it's eggs, so long as he doesn't bark at the wrong time."

That settled the matter, and the new Bob went home with Chuck to take the place of the Bob whose name was Ben.

Jerusha and Elizabeth and Polly and Ben shook hands with Chuck at the gate and said good-by to him, with many good wishes. Ben brought him two sticks while the others were telling him how much they had enjoyed his visit. At the railway station Mr. Harris shook hands and said, as the train came in sight —

“Now, Chuck, when I come to town, I’m coming to see ye. We won’t be satisfied unless you come again next year. Good-by. Don’t you ever forget what I’ve told you about horses.”

“I won’t,” said Chuck. “Good-by.”

The train was only to stop a minute and he had to hurry on board, full of anxiety about a small yelp in his basket.

“Hope he won’t do it again,” said he. “How he does kick and wriggle!”

It was just as well, perhaps, that the conductor of that train was in a hurry when he went through after tickets, for he was hardly out of the car before Chuck’s basket began to bark at the situation.

“No dogs allowed in the passenger-cars,” said a gruff old gentleman who sat near.

Up went the corners of Chuck’s eyes.

“There isn’t any in this car,” he said.

“What’s in your basket, then?”

“Bark,” said Chuck; “but the basket isn’t a passenger-car.”

The old gentleman joined the other people around in a laugh at Chuck's answer, and in another minute they were all admiring the contents of the basket.

"No," said one man; "you're right. A bull-pup in a basket, is not a dog in a passenger-car; but he'd better keep covered up, for all that."

Bob was therefore compelled to miss all the scenery along the road, and so, for that matter, did Chuck himself. He almost felt as if the train he was in were carrying him out of a dream. If so, it had been a very pleasant and profitable dream, and he meant to dream it all over some day or other. Bob in the basket made it more real to him; but there was nothing as yet to make going home seem real. He was anxious to get there and see how much all things had changed during the long, long, wonderful time that he had spent in the country.

The train paused briefly at station after station, and every time it did so the conductor passed through after tickets. Chuck's hand was always in the basket then, smoothing Bob's head. When the station nearest the Harlem River was reached, Chuck grasped his satchel in one hand and the basket in the other, and hurried out. Bob's time for concealment had gone by. His head was through a hole in the cover, and he barked and yelped a good-by to the conductor and all the passengers of that train.

"That pup o' yourn's got a good head," said the conductor to Chuck, as he reached the platform. "He'll be a dog one of these days."

All the pains taken to hide him had been wasted, evidently.

From that railway platform Chuck could take a look across the Harlem and feel once more sure that there was a great city on Manhattan Island.

"Every man in it was a boy once," the thought came to him, "and some of 'em didn't know any more'n I do. I'm going to try it on, I am. I don't s'pose I shall ever own the city. Don't want to. There's too much of it. There's one thing I can do, though; I can make a man of myself. I've kind o' found that out. Now I want to get home and see the folks and Nap and Dick. Wonder if anybody's stolen old Billy while I was gone."

It struck him, as he walked along, that the city was a noisier and dustier place than he ever before had thought it. Bob was on his feet now, and it was well that he wore a collar and had a master to hold the string that led him. Otherwise he would surely have imitated his cousin Ben and got himself lost. As it was, he only got bewildered.

There was noise enough after Chuck reached the grocery, both down-stairs and up-stairs, and

it seemed as if Bob's welcome was every bit as enthusiastic as was Chuck's own, except from his mother.

"You've been away so long!" she exclaimed. "'Pears to me as if you'd grown since you went away."

"Now, mother," he said, "I haven't; but don't you think Nelly has? Isn't she taller, or something?"

"She hasn't changed a mite, that I can see," said Mrs. Purdy, and yet she remembered having the same idea at first when Nelly returned. It had faded away from her mind, but there had been a reason for it. Chuck and Nelly had done something more than finish a year at school. Right at the end of it they had each been "promoted", and had made a long step forward. Even Phil Zimmerman saw something new in Chuck.

The next individual to make the discovery was Napoleon, and he did not do it by means of apples or sugar. It was rather by the aid of a light buggy to which he found himself harnessed, early the next morning. Mr. Purdy had given his consent, that first evening, after hearing of the performances of the brown colt out at the Harris farm.

"Do you see that, Mr. Gorrik?" said Chuck's father, as Nap was driven away. "He never

before got into anything in the way he got into that buggy. He's learned how to drive!"

That was in Nap's mind, also; and he stepped off like a horse who was glad to have something better than a grocery wagon behind him. It did not take long to reach the Boulevard at McComb's Dam Bridge, and a man was coming over that with a fast horse at the moment when Chuck wheeled Napoleon into the broad, beautiful avenue.

The driver of the fast horse let him out at once on leaving the bridge behind him, but so did Chuck let out Nap. That was all that was needed by either animal or either driver. It was very early and the road was clear. Even a mounted policeman who was there on duty saw no reason for preventing what he called "that little dust". Of course it had to be short, but at the end of nearly a half mile the fast horse was still a little behind Nap, and his driver pulled in.

"Young man," he shouted, "hold on a moment. Who owns that crab?"

"John Purdy," said Chuck.

"Do you mind my taking a look at him?"

"Of course not," said Chuck; "but he isn't for sale."

The man got down from his trotting wagon. So did Chuck, and held the other horse while Nap was examined all over.

"Your horse would just about match him," said Chuck.

"They'd make a team, every way, if your fellow is as sound and kind" —

"Perfectly," said Chuck.

"Got any faults?" asked the man, with an expression of face that meant — "You won't tell if he has."

"Only one, that I know of," said Chuck. "You can't get him through a barn door, either way."

"How do you get him in and out, then? Through a window?"

"No," said Chuck. "Side door."

"No side door to my stable," said the man. "Tell you what, though, you'd never do to deal in horses. You're too honest by a long shot. I'd pay a smart figure to make a match team, but a fault like that—why didn't you keep your mouth shut? You could ha' chiselled me easy."

"Wouldn't ha' been worth while," said Chuck. "I don't propose to go into the chisel business, now or any other time."

"Perhaps you think I'm in it," said the man; "but if you do you're mistaken. I'm perfectly willing to trade business cards with a man or boy that can hold back from cheating in a horse trade. Don't know that I ever met one before."

He held out a card as he spoke, and to Chuck's surprise, it was that of a law firm.

"Corwin, Ridges & Buncey," he read. "You're one of 'em?"

"I'm Buncey. Are you John Purdy?" he asked, staring at the grocery card given him.

"Yes," replied Nap's driver; "and so is my father. That's his card. He's older than I am, and they call me Chuck."

"I'll never forget your face as long as I live," said Mr. Buncey; "and I don't know but what you'll hear from me again, some day."

More questions were asked and answered, and then Napoleon and the other horse had more trotting to do. Nap was not given enough to tire him before his day's work began. He was driven back to the grocery with a full assurance in Chuck's mind that he had a great deal of speed in him, but that it was all of no use because of his having such an unreasonable fear of barn-doors. Somehow or other it seemed as if there was a lesson in it, and Chuck groped around in his mind after that lesson.

"It wouldn't be of any use to train Nap," he said. "I wonder if it's going to be of any use to train me. It won't be, if I'm going to be afraid of anything, or catch any other fault that men don't want to have around."

He knew of several such faults and of men who

had them, more or less badly, and he made up his mind to steer clear of anything that would hinder him from using all that there might be in him.

He did not know for a long time, that, before that day was over, a great lawyer was telling one of his most respected clients the story of the drive he had had and the boy he had seen.

"There's his card, Mr. Miller. Queerest face. Said they called him Chuck."

"Purdy? You don't say! Well, now."

"Do you know him?"

Up went one corner of the old gentleman's eye, and the lawyer exclaimed—"That's the very boy!"

Then out came the story of the fire and the pocket-book, and Mr. Buncey remarked, emphatically—"I'm going to learn more about him. There must be something in him. He's a boy of a thousand. He's an original."

"That's what he is," said old Mr. Miller.

"If he'll only train well, I believe there's any amount of speed in him."

"Hope he'll keep his honesty. It's about the most important thing there is, nowadays."

Before vacation was over, both Mr. Buncey and Mr. Miller knew more about Chuck Purdy, and had more firmly determined to "keep an eye on him".

Week after week went by, and the time drew near for school to open.

"Nelly," said Mrs. Purdy one morning, as both her children sat by the sitting-room window after breakfast, "how do you think you're going to do this term?"

"Seems to me as if I could learn more and easier than I ever could before," said Nelly, confidently.

"Glad of that," said Mrs. Purdy; "but you never had much trouble anyhow."

"I don't know if I can beat Julia Cramer and one or two other girls," said Nelly, much more thoughtfully; "but I'm going to see if I can't make myself good for something."

"That's it," said Chuck; "that's what I'm going to do."

"Do you s'pose you can learn any better," asked she, "now you've been promoted and had a vacation?"

"Don't mean to look at a book till school begins," said Chuck. "I'll know how 'tis, then. There's one thing, though, that you can make up your mind to."

"What's that, Chuck?" asked his mother.

"School or no school, books or no books, and whether I'm as dull as a hoe or not, I'm going right ahead and some day I'm going to be a Man!"

THE END.

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